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Russia denies letter calling for Kuchma's overthrow

(OMRI/UkrNews)—Russian officials on Jan. 14 angrily denounced as a "forgery" a document which the Kyiv paper Vseukrainskie vedomosti published the previous day, Russian and Western media reported.

The paper claimed the document is an October 1996 letter from Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Krylov to presidential foreign policy aide Dmitrii Ryurikov, in which Krylov allegedly termed Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma's foreign policy "anti-Russian and destructive," and called for steps to engineer his ouster.

Among the steps recommended for Kuchma's ouster was impeachment by the Supreme Council of Ukraine. The letter stated that Russian Ambassador to Ukraine, Yuri Dubinin has been confidentialy informed by "a number of members of influential factions of the parliament of Ukraine" that such a move can be initiated through a propaganda campaign.

Should impeachment be unsuccessful, the letter stated that other methods to disredit Kuchma politically could be employed.

The letter condemned Kuchma for his rejection of CIS integration and his unwillingness to discuss preserving a single Black Sea Fleet and the status of Sevastopol.

Ukrainian Deputy Foreign Minister Volodymyr Khandohy announced that if the letter is genuine, it does not correspond to civilized norms "even in such a peculiar field as diplomacy."

He added that Ukraine will seek an official explanation from Russia over the letter.

Krylov said such a letter "did not and could not exist," adding that "Ukraine is a state friendly to Russia."

The Russian Foreign Ministry termed the publication "a provocative falsification," blasted it as "Goebbels-like propaganda," and requested that Ukrainian authorities investigate the incident.

However, the newspaper said it is standing by its story and has documentary proof of the letter's authenticity.

The full text of this letter is carried in a Ukrainian-language story in this issue of Ukrainian News.

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Rev. Huculak named Edmonton Eparch

Reverend Lawrence Daniel Huculak, OSBM, was named Ukrainian Catholic Eparch of Edmonton Jan. 14 by Pope John Paul II.

His consecration is scheduled for 10 am, Thursday Apr. 3 at St. Basil's Church in Edmonton.

The main consecrators will be Metropolitan Michael Bzdel of the Winnipeg Archeparchy, Bishop Cornelius Pasichny of Saskatoon and Bishop Severian Yakymyshyn of the New Westminster Eparch.

The consecration will be followed by a banquet at the Convention Inn South.

At 46, Rev. Huculak, who currently serves as superior of the Basilian Fathers' monastery in Mundare, will be the youngest Canadian bishop in charge of an Eparchy. Only Auxiliary Bishop Stephen Soroka of the Winnipeg Ukrainian Archeparchy is younger.

He will also be the fourth bishop of the Edmonton Eparchy, which was established in 1956. His predecessors were Bishops Neil Savaryn, Demetrius Martin Greschuk and Myron Daciuk, who died Jan. 14, 1996.

Speaking with Ukrainian News, Rev. Huculak admitted he was nervous about the appointment and said the announcement came unexpectedly.

Reverend Lawrence Daniel Huculak, OSBM

He added that what he sees as the main challenges in his new position are working with youth to get the

Cont. on P. 3

Голодівка профспілкових діячів у приміщенні українського парляменту

Ігор Стратій

(КБУВ)—Майже добу в ніч на 24 січня у підвалах приміщення українського парляменту голодувало 26 лідерів профспілкових організацій на знак протесту проти скасування Національним банком України своєї ж постанови двомісячної давности про урівнення прав різних профспілок щодо управління коштами державного страхування.

Проспілкові активісти звинувачують Голову Верховної Ради Олександра Мороза, котрий у листі до Нацбанку вимагав повернення старих порядків, коли виключний доступ до страхових державних коштів мала Федерація профспілок України на чолі з Олександром Стояном (правонаступниця колишніх «єдиних» радянських профспілок, прозваних у тоталітарні часи «школою комунізму»). На це були політичн причини: заявляючи про переміщення своєї партії в бік соціял-демократії европейського типу, лідер соціялістів О. Мороз дедалі більше зближується з лідером «офіційних» профспілок, сподіваючись отримати додатковий електорат на наступних виборах.

Протестуючи проти обмеження прав, лідери Національної конфедерації профспілок України (запеклого противника Федерації профспілок) домагалися зустрічі із спікером Верховної Ради і таки зустрілися з ним о 10-ій годині вечора, але результатами лишилися невдоволені. Відтак відмовилися покидати приміщення парляменту і, оголосивши голодівку, заночували на робочих столах. Під ранок наступного дня, коли мала завершуватися чергова сесія Верховної Ради, під приводом необхідности прибрати приміщення їх заманили в підвал і заблокували там, не допускаючи до телефонів та туалетів та ізолювавши від журналістів і народних депутатів.

Під вечір, після закриття сесії, голодівку було припинено. Профспілкові лідери заявивши, що «робитимуть усе необхідне для зняття Олександра Мороза з посади голови Верховної Ради» і повідомили про домовлену зустірч з Президентом. Водночас вони надіслали заяви до генеральної прокуратури та міжнародних організацій з проханням захистити права Національної конфедерації профспілок України.

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Москва провокує відставку Кучми?

Січнева сенсація, спричинена публікацією таємного документу

Леся Марисенко

(КБУВ)—Звинувачення України в погіршенні міждержавних стосунків і навіть у власних економічних проблемах та негараздах майже з перших днів після розпаду Радянського Союзу стало однією з «норм» російської великодержавної політики. Причому, дедалі чіткіше простежується злагодженість антиукраїнських дій між різними гілками російської влади, що у власних справах порозумітися не можуть. (Яскравий приклад — претензії на Чорноморську фльоту та домагання «російського статусу» для міста Севастополя в Криму). Українців перестали вже дивувати і втручання російських політиків у внутрішні справи незалежної Української держави. Однак час від часу трапляється «щось таке» в коридорах московської влади, від чого навіть ліниві та відразливий до політики український обиватель починає стукати кулаком по столу.

Сенсаційний ефект справила на притлумлене самолюбство українців публікація в популярній київській газеті «Всеукраїнскіє Ведомості» з 14 січня статті «Усунути Президента Кучму!» Вона оприлюднила текст таємного листа з апартаментів міністерства закордонних справ Російської Федерації, який варто переповісти в повному обсязі (наш переклад з російської):

«ОСОБИСТО.
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Помічнику Президента Російської Федерації Д. Б. Рюрикову.
Шановний Дмитре Борисовичу!

На виконання Вашого доручення про напрацювання можливих заходів для протидії антиросійській деструктивній політиці президента України Л. Д. Кучми, метою якої є конфронтація на ключових напрямках російсько-українських відносин, вважали б за доцільне висловити такі міркування.

На нинішній момент основним елементом, що визначає негативний розвиток та спрямованість міждержавних відносин між Росією та Україною, є саме безкомпромісна політична лінія Л. Д. Кучми, особливо його принципова відмова від участі української сторони в поглибленні інтеграційних процесів у рамках СНД під головуванням Росії, небажання обговорювати можливі варіянти збереження єдиної Чорноморської фльоти та статусу м. Севастополя.

Згідно з інформацією, що надається Посольством РФ в Києві (підтвердженою конфіденціяльними джерелами в українському уряді), антиросійська політика президента України буде реалізовуватися до наступних виборів у 1999 р. без суттєвих коректив. При цьому, згідно з діючим українським законодавством, глава держави фактично одноосібно визначає і реалізує зовнішньополітичний курс.

Таким чином, єдино можливим варіянтом зміни жорсткої позиції України щодо комплексу стратегічно важливих питань є нейтралізація особистого негативного впливу Л. Д. Кучми. Найбільш оптимальним та здійснимим виходом у цьому зв'язку була б політична дискредитація українського президента, що зробило б можливим його імпічмент за рішенням Верховної Ради. Згідно з інформацією Ю. В. Дубініна (амбасадор Росії в Україні), ряд членів впливових фракцій парляменту України повідомили в конфіденційному порядку, що ініціювання процесу відлучення глави держави від займаної посади можливе в разі розкручування пропагандивної машини по звинуваченню його в поступках стратегічного характеру російській стороні.

Нам здається, що ролю каталізатора для започаткування згаданого процесу могли б зіграти спільні дії обох палат Федеральних Зборів РФ щодо ухвалення законодавчих актів, спрямованих на припинення подальшого розподілу ЧФ з підтвердженням російської приналежности м. Севастополя. Одночасно по офіційних каналах було б передано, що подібні рішення не відбивають точку зору вищого керівництва Росії, яка лишається незмінною. (Згодом так воно все й сталося).

Найвірогідніше, що в існуючій ситуації значної залежности України від поставок російських енергоносіїв та нерозв'язаности проблем зовнішньої заборгованости, президент Л. Д. Кучма утримається від різких зустрічних кроків, що дасть можливість його противникам розгорнути широку пропагандивну кампанію із звинуваченням глави держави у зраді державних інтересів. Ефективним було б також одночасне підключення до названої кампанії російських ЗМІ (засобів масової інформації), які працювали б у напрямку формування образу Л. Д. Кучми як політика, схильного до поступок Росії.

Подальший розвиток подій міг би привести якщо не до імпічменту, то, безперечно, до суттєвого послаблення позиції президента України, що відповідало б інтересам російської національної безпеки.

У цьому зв'язку вважаємо за доцільне розпочати конфеденційні консультації з порушеної проблеми із зацікавленими членами Ради Федерації та головами фракцій Державної Думи для підготовки відповідних рішень.

Просимо орієнтувати щодо подальшої спрямованости дій.
З повагою,
Заступник міністра С. Крилов».

Уже в день опублікування цього документу російська телевізія заходилася з усіх сил заперечувати його існування, а політики сусідньої держави заговорили про провокативний характер публікації. Російського амбасадора було запрошено до Міністерства закордонних справ України, де дипломати з Москви також заперечили існування оприлюдненого листа. Але встановити істину не вдалося. Редактор газети на співбесіді в Службі безпеки запевнив, що редакція має документальні підтвердження, котрі можуть бути надані суду.

Секретар Ради з питань національної безпеки при Президенті України Володимир Горбулін відбувся на прес-конференції загальними словами (мовляв, нинішній напружений характер українсько-російських стосунків не виключає появи таких публікацій), але поінформував, що ніяких розслідувань з цього приводу Рада не проводитиме. Натомість президент, інформують засоби масової інформації, дав відповідні доручення щодо встановлення істини.

Загалом же, якщо проаналізувати висновки українських політиків та аналітиків, думки розійшлися. Одні не сумніваються у справжності документу (адже реальні події, розстановка сил та характер протиріч між різними гілками влади в Україні дивовижно збігаються з російськими «рекомендаціями», і сам стиль листа надто вже правоподібний), інші — заперечують (не насмілюючись стверджувати — спеціяльно організовувалася ця публікація чи стала наслідком «підкидання» провокативної підробки у певних цілях — чи то з українського, чи з російського боку). В усякому разі, саме в такій публікації є дуже багато зацікавлених.

«Те, що сталося, мене не дивує, — заявив попередній Президент України Леонід Кравчук. — Згадайте, яка цілеспрямована кампанія велася відповідними спецслужбами та окремими засобами масової інформації нашого північного сусіда під час мого президентства. Тепер вогонь ведеться проти Леоніда Даниловича. І справа не в особах — їм байдуже, хто буде Президентом України... Головне, щоб він не противився проімперським амбіціям Москви».

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(Прес-Рух)—Провід Харківської міської організації Народного Руху опротестував рішення Міської ради про використання органами місцевого самоврядування, підприємствами та організаціями Харкова російської мови поряд з державною українською. У зверненні до Президента України Леоніда Кучми, міністра юстиції Сергія Головатого, голови облдержадміністрації Олега Дьоміна, члени Проводу вимагають негайного втручання в ситуацію, що склалася.

«У разі неприйняття відповідних заходів, — заявляють автори документу, — питання вирішуватиметься власними силами, аж до звернення до Конституційного Суду».

Moscow mayor claims Sevastopol

(OMRI/JF Monitor)—Moscow Mayor and Russian presidential aspirant Yuriy Luzhkov created an international incident when he used the opportunity of his visit to Sevastopol, Jan. 17, to reiterate Russian claims to the city.

Luzhkov flew unannounced to Sevastopol despite Ukrainian threats to declare him a persona non grata and his earlier assurances that he would not come, but would tend to his broken leg.

Upon arrival, Luzhkov reiterated his position that Sevastopol had never been handed over to Ukraine, saying when former Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev handed Crimea over to Ukraine "after a drinking binge", Sevastopol was turned into a separate administrative entity and was not handed over to Ukraine.

Luzhkov declared that "no one can stop me, I have traveled and will travel to Sevastopol, which is a Russian city." He rejected the possibility that Kyiv might bar him from entering Ukraine, saying that by doing so, "Ukraine would show that it is completely undemocratic."

Citing polls saying 70% of Russians believe Sevastopol belongs to Russia, Luzhkov said "Russia will never accept the current situation," adding that Ukraine will ultimately be forced to begin negotiations on Sevastopol's status.

The next evening, Luzhkov and his bodyguards spent most of the night at the airport, after customs officials refused to let one of the bodyguards leave because he allegedly brought a gun illegally into the country.

Luzhkov's entourage denied the gun was brought in illegally, and Luzhkov called the incident "a very primitive" act of revenge.

Foreign Minister Hennadiy Udovenko said he viewed Luzhkov's visit very negatively.

He said he had personally appealed to Luzhkov not to visit Sevastopol or aggravate the situation there, and that Luzhkov's claims to the city were not constructive for Russian-Ukrainian relations.

President Leonid Kuchma, speaking in Homel, Belarus, during a meeting with Belarusian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka, said Russian-Ukrainian relations are deteriorating.

Meanwhile, Russian presidential spokesman Sergei Yastrzhembsky told a Kremlin briefing that Luzhkov's actions reflect his personal position and "should not be confused with the Russian president's position." Russia is one of the guarantors of Ukraine's territorial integrity, Yastrzhembsky recalled.

Nonetheless, Yeltsin's appointees in the Federation Council recently voted almost unanimously in favor of that chamber's resolution demanding Sevastopol for Russia, as did deputies of the pro-government "Russia is Our Home" faction in the Duma.

Moreover, one of Russia's leading liberal reformers, Nizhny Novgorod governor Boris Nemtsov, has added his voice to Luzhkov's by stating that Sevastopol is "a Russian city acquired with Russian blood."

Nemtsov called for "Russian economic expansion in Crimea, beginning with Sevastopol."

He urged Russian banks to buy up shops and factories there and to "turn Sevastopol into a Russian city de facto." Subsequently, Russian "economic expansion should extend to Ukraine and Belarus...then the integration and unification of former Soviet republics would become inevitable," Nemtsov said.

At the opposite end of the political spectrum, Georgi Tikhonov, chairman of the ultranationalist-proCommunist Narodovlastie group in the Duma and of its CIS Affairs Committee, stated that he "regards Luzhkov as his political adversary but fully approves of what he had to say on his visit to Crimea."

The Zhirinovsky party's Aleksei Mitrofanov, chairman of the Duma's Geopolitics Committee, voiced a similar sentiment, stating that "Luzhkov behaves very correctly, he is increasingly resembling Zhirinovsky."

Ukraine's Foreign Ministry reacted by delivering a note to the Russian Embassy stressing that statements by Russian officials of the kind made by Luzhkov could damage Ukrainian-Russian relations.

The ministry also circulated a statement calling Luzhkov's statements "unfriendly" and his claim that Sevastopol "is and will stay a Russian city" a threat to Ukraine's territorial integrity.

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Rev. Huculak named Edmonton Eparch

Cont. from P. 1

message of the gospel across to them and dealing with the problem of population decline in rural parishes.

The key towards meeting the challenge of youth will be finding ways of making the Church relevant in a changing modern society, he noted.

Those who know Huculak say he is the perfect man for the job.

"I certainly think he is the right person for it," Father Vital Pidskalny, superior of the Basilian Fathers in Edmonton and a friend of Huculak since his seminary years told the Western Catholic Reporter.

"He is well educated. He is capable. He is a good speaker and he has pastoral experience."

Pidskalny also described Huculak as a "gentleman" and a man who "understands human nature and tries to help people."

Father William Hupalo, the Eparchial administrator, agrees Huculak has all the right qualities. "He is a jovial person. he is very pleasant and he never gets worked up about anything."

Rev. Huculak was born Jan. 25 1951 in Vernon, BC, the son of Andrew and Katherine (nee Marcyniuk). He attended elementary and high school in Vernon and also St. Vladimir's College in Roblin, MB, conducted by the Ukrainian-rite Redemptorist Fathers.

He joined the Basilian Fathers (Order of St. Basil the Great - Ukrainian Rite) in 1969 in Ottawa and made his novitiate at St. Josaphat's Monastery in Glen Cove, NY, in 1971-72. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree with concentration in philosophy from the University of Ottawa in 1974 and continued with theological studies at St. Anselm's University in Rome. After ordination to the priesthood in 1977 he specialized in liturgical studies at the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome.

On Nov. 18, 1985 he defended his doctoral thesis entitled: "The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom in the Kievan Metropolitan Province during the Period of Union with Rome. 1596-1805." The director of his thesis was the well known Jesuit Liturgist, Robert Taft. SJ. With the publication of his work in 1990 in the Basilian Fathers publication series, Analecta OSBM, Father Larry was awarded a Doctorate in Oriental Church Studies (DSEO) by the Pontifical Oriental Institute.

While in Rome Father Larry was director of the Basilian students choir which regularly sang the Ukrainian Divine Liturgy on Vatican Radio, transmitted to Ukraine, Eastern Europe and Siberia.

After 11 years in Rome he returned to Canada in the spring of 1986 and was appointed pastor of Sts. Peter & Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church in Mundare, from 1986 to 1996. In September of 1996 he was appointed the superior (ihumen) of Sts. Peter & Paul monastery in Mundare and the Master of Novices. He is also director of the Basilian Fathers Museum, and gives missions, retreats and workshops. Since 1992 he has been Adjunct lecturer at Newman Theological College in Edmonton, teaching courses on Byzantine Liturgy during the Summer School in Liturgical Studies.

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Kuchma increases arms export controls

(OMRI)—President Leonid Kuchma has issued a decree aimed at increasing control over defense-related exports, Ukrainian Radio reported on Dec. 28.

The decree transforms the State Export Commission into the State Commission for Export Control Policy. The Export Technical Committee will be renamed the State Export Control Service under the cabinet of ministers.

The reorganization is meant to establish strict control over international transfers of arms and military technology as well as raw materials and skills that may be used for the production of weapons and other military technology.

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Незалежні профспілки хочуть відставки Мороза

(Радіо Люкс)—Центральна Рада Національної конфедерації профспілок України виступила з заявою, в якій «поставила під сумнів громадянське та моральне право Олександра Мороза займати посаду Голови Верховної Ради України».

У заяві О. Мороза звинувачується у намірі «створити *тіньовий Кабінет*, використовуючи його в боротьбі за владу в державі».

Конфедерація звинувачує його в тому, що він «сприяє збереженню за Федерацією профспілок України монопольного права на володіння народним майном та коштами, що суперечить Конституції».

Серед звинувачень, що їх висувають автори заяви — «створення негативної думки навколо профспілок, що не входять до Федерації, проведення протиправних перевірок, принизливих акцій та гонінь щодо незалежних профлідерів».

Коротко

Державних радянських газет не лишилося?

(КБУВ)—Змінила назву житомирська газета «Радянська Житомирщина» — остання з державних газет обласного масштабу, що противилися виведенню із своїх пашпортів плям тоталітарного радянського минулого. Голові обласної державної адміністрації А. Малиновському вдалося умовити депутатів обласної ради погодитися на нову назву газети — просто «Житомирщина».

Злочинство знижеується

(Прес-центр «Південь»)—Як повідомили з управління Міністерства внутрішніх справ України в Одеській області — «минулого року вперше за останні десять років не спостерігалося зростання загальної кількості злочинів, зберіглася тенденція зменшення кількості важких злочинів. Минулого року виявлено 53 організованих злочинних угрупувань і 5 злочинних формувань. Тим не менше — було відзначено, що організаційні практичні дії міліції залишаються недостатніми».

Гідрокомплекс під знаком запиту

(Прес-Центр «Південь»)—У Миколаєві проведено прес-конференцію для журналістів, за участю представників обласної екологічної Асоціяції та співголови Національного Екоцентру. Захід було присвячено пританням Ташлицького гідрокомплексу складової частини Південноукраїнської АЕС. Учасники зустрічі з журналістами розповіли про негативні наслідки екологічної експертизи проведеної у зв'язку з наміром будувати Ташлицьку гідрокомплексну станцію.

Чи Ваші діти, чи внуки слідкують за подіями в Україні?

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Українські атомні електростанції — горе чи порятунок?

Валентина Карпенко

(КБУВ)—На тлі подальшого, хоч і сповільненого загального спаду виробництва в державному секторі української економіки, працівники атомної енергетики мають право пишатися своїми успіхами: річне виробництво електроенергії на атомних електростанціях збільшилося на 2,3 відсотка. Голова Держкоматому України Віктор Чебров задоволено констатує, що виробничі показники зростають одночасно із зміцненням безпеки. Якщо довіряти цьому відомству, кількість порушень на атомних станціях минулого року скоротилася на 16 відсотків.

Тим часом міністр охорони довколишнього природного середовища та ядерної безпеки Юрій Костенко, бувши переконаним у необхідності за-криття Чорнобильської АЕС, оприлюднив «свіжу» урядову інформацію щодо очікуваних витрат на мінімізацію наслідків атомної катастрофи 1986 року. За його оцінками, стабілізація стану сар-кофага над поруйнованим реактором потрібно 210–335 млн долярів.

Проблему нестачі коштів, на думку Ю. Костенка, вдасться розв'язати завдяки підписанню минулого року двох угод про гранти для Чорнобиля – 118,1 млн ЕКЮ від Европейського банку реконструкції та розвитку і 37 млн ЕКЮ від Европейського Союзу. Можливо, доля саркофагу (точніше, проблема пошуку коштів на його «вгамування») буде остаточно вирішена під час наради країн «великої сімки» у червні цього року в американському місті Денвері.

Віктор Ющенко — незамінимий керівник Національного банку України

Валентика Карпенко

(КБУВ)—Президент України Л. Кучма подав до парляменту для затвердження на посаді голови правління Національного Банку України кандидатуру відомого в міжнародних фінансових інституціях фахівця банківської справи Віктора Ющенка.

Подія — далеко не з рядових. Українці звикли до швидкої зміни урядів та прем'єрів, а це перший випадок, коли високий посадовець, від котрого залежить ситуація в країні, відбув повний термін наданих повноважень і розвіяв сумніви щодо його компетенцій та здатності керувати складними процесами. І коли постало питання про конституційну процедуру призначення головного банкіра на черговий 4-річний термін, фахівці заявили, що Віктору Ющенку заміни немає.

Був час, коли в період гіперінфляції В. Ющенка пробували зняти з посади комуністи, невдоволені його непоступливістю щодо надання всіляких кредитів збанкрутілим державним підприємствам та колгоспам. Але керівник Національного банку лишався непоступливим. Не піддавався він і домаганням уряду піти на уступки в «латанні бюджетних дірок» та відшкодуванні затриманих заробітків на підприємствах державного сектора та економіки. Зрештою непоступливість В. Ющенка, підкріплена приборканням інфляції та успішним проведенням першого етапу грошової реформи лише зміцнила авторитет «батька гривні» і зробила його відомим та авторитетним не лише в Україні, а й за кордоном.

Рівень місячної інфляції української гривні в минулому місяці знову знизився — 0,9 відсотка, що дозволило Національному банку знизити річну кредитну ставку до 35 відсотків (це найліпший показник за всі роки незалежности України). Статистика засвідчує, що останнім часом ріст цін стосувався передусім продовольчих товарів (1%), випереджаючи підвищення вартості непродовольчих товарів (0,6%) та послуг (0,8%).

Загальна річна інфляція українських грошей минулого року становила 39,7 відсотка, або 2,8% на місяць, що в три з лишком рази нижче, ніж попереднього року (у 1995 р. середньомісячна інфляція фіксувалася на рівні 9 відсотків). Це досить пристойний показник, якщо зважити на те, що постійно підвищувалися ціни на спожитий газ та електроенергію для населення. Платні послуги минулого року підвищилися аж у 2,13 раза. Зате інші товари дорожчали помірно: продукти харчування — на 17,4% за рік, непродовольчі — на 18,8%.

Досягнуті показники дозволяють прогнозувати подальше поліпшення в фінансовій сфері. Уряд упевнений, що 1997 року споживчі ціни зростуть лише на 25%, з чим погоджуються і зарубіжні експерти, називаючи очікуваний показник 20–25%. Такий помірний рівень інфляції, досі ще не знайомий незалежній Українській державі, дозволить здійснити реформу податкової системи (знизити податковий прес на виробника), оздоровити кредитний клімат і прилучити зарубіжних інвесторів, яких досі відлякувала нестабільність української економіки.

Лазаренко грізно попередив, що заблокувати податкову реформу не вдасться

Валентина Карпенко

(КБУВ)—«Я знайду способи проведення змін у податковій політиці», — заявив керівник українського уряду Павло Лазаренко перед повторним розглядом у парляменті пакету урядових законів, спрямованих на зниження податків одночасно із ліквідацією багатьох невиправданих соціяльних пільг.

Підраховано, що за останні роки парляментарі в намаганнях догодити своїм виборцям наплодили 76 законів з нормами про надання всіляких пільг шляхом звільнення від податків та всіляких платежів. Це обійшлося б державі в 19 млрд гривень, тоді як вся видаткова частина річного державного бюджету становить 44 млрд гривень (менше 30 млрд. долярів). Знижувати податковий прес на виробника парлямент готовий, а ось скорочувати пільги за рік до наступних виборів — діло непросте...

Президент Леонід Кучма знову й знову повторює, що не підпише бюджет 1997 року, якщо той буде складений на старій законодавчій базі. Парлямент же не має права «підганяти» бюджет під ще не ухвалені закони. Слід сподіватися, що законодавці підуть на поступки і змушені будуть піддатися вимогам уряду, оскільки шансів перемогти президента у разі чергової кризи влади вони, судячи з попередньої практики, не мають ніяких...

Остаточне схвалення бюджету 1997 року (його проєкт прийнято в першому читанні і, отже ж, перекладено на парлямент) очікується в березні. Це означає, що в січні-лютому Верховна Рада борсатиметься в економічних проблемах, зарані готуючись до поразок на полі захисту «соціяльних надбань трудящих».

Віце-спікер Ради отримує нагороди від підпільного керівництва зліквідованої держави

Віктор Бикодір

(КБУВ)—Першому заступнику голови Верховної Ради України, палкому прихильнику комуністичних ідей та борцю за збереження колгоспного ладу Олександру Ткаченку вручено Золоту Зірку Героя Соціялістичної Праці та орден Леніна — найвищі нагороди колишнього СРСР.

Новоспечений «герой» пояснив, що до цих нагород його було представлено ще 1978 року Київським облкомом Компартії України, коли він очолював партійний комітет у районному містечку Таращі (до речі, саме тут у 1994 році було обрано до Верховної Ради нинішнього голову парляменту та лідера соціялістів О. Мороза). Так «рідна партія» хотіла відзначити заслуги Ткаченка у високих урожаях хліба. Але тоді, «недооцінили» його, і ось лише через 18 років «нагорода знайшла свого героя», як любили колись писати комуністичні газети.

Нагороджений не вкриває свого задоволення. Для вручення нагород неіснуючої країни до Києва приїхали кілька депутатів розпущеної Б. Єльцином Верховної Ради Союзу РСР на чолі з одіозною активісткою руху за відновлення СРСР Сажі Умалатовою.

Moroz urges clear stand on NATO

(OMRI/JF Monitor/Ukrinform)—Parliamentary Speaker Oleksander Moroz has urged the parliament to take an official position on NATO expansion and the deployment of nuclear arms on the territory of new member countries, ITAR-TASS reported on Jan. 24.

He complained about the often divergent opinions among politicians over Ukraine's possible membership in NATO at a time when a "a complicated process of reevaluating the idea of NATO expansion is under way worldwide."

Moroz's comments followed Foreign Minister Hennadiy Udovenko's visit the previous week to Geneva, where he said non-affiliated Ukraine is not planning to join NATO.

Udovenko told journalists that Ukraine's status as a nation not belonging to any bloc is government policy and the Ukrainian government intends to remain consistent in pursuing this policy in spite of recent hostile declarations and territorial claims to Ukraine by some Russian politicians.

The foreign minister said that Ukraine had chosen the policy of non-membership in any political or military bloc because it considered it to be in line with modern realities, adding that it was the best choice.

Earlier this month, Security Council Chairman Volodymyr Horbulin suggested Ukraine might join NATO by 2010.

Since the constitution states that Ukraine is a neutral, non-aligned state, that document would have to be amended to allow entry into the alliance, he noted.

Horbulin said Ukraine is currently seeking a special agreement with NATO and plans to open a NATO information center in Kyiv in the spring.

He added that he hoped an agreement on special relations with NATO will be submitted for approval at the NATO summit in July.

NATO's special relations with Russia should develop parallel to those with Ukraine, but not on a trilateral basis, he commented.

During his visit to Poland, Jan. 23, President Leonid Kuchma was asked about the prospects of Ukraine joining NATO in the future

He suggested that "NATO secretary-general Javier Solana be asked: is NATO prepared to admit Ukraine as a member? My prognosis will depend on his answer to this question."

Meanwhile, a poll conducted by Socis-Gallup and the Democratic Initiatives Fund found that 36% of Ukrainians believe Ukraine should some day join NATO.

Nineteen percent said Ukraine should never join NATO; 45% were undecided.

Twelve percent of respondents said they trusted NATO, 19% did not trust it, 28% neither trusted nor mistrusted it, and 41% were undecided.

Those who supported joining NATO were mostly young people, university graduates, and people who also favor private enterprise.

Ukraine still wants to sell bombers

(JF Monitor)—Ukrainian defense minister Oleksandr Kuzmuk said Jan. 16 in Kyiv that Ukraine is still willing to sell all the Tu-160 "Blackjack" and Tu-95MS "Bear" bombers that it inherited from the Soviet Union.

Last March then Russian defense minister Pavel Grachev had agreed to buy 25 of the strategic aircraft-10 of the 19 Tu-160s and 15 of the Tu-95MS missile-carriers — that were in the Ukrainian inventory. In return, Grachev offered to provide Ukraine with a number of military transports and helicopters, as well as with 12 jet fighters. In November the two sides were said to have agreed on another formula: to credit US$320-$350 million of Ukraine's energy debt to Russia.

Kuzmuk spoke as if both of these offers had lapsed, but suggested that Ukraine nevertheless remained interested in either option. Meanwhile, the planes continue to deteriorate. Kuzmuk said that each was costing Ukraine approximately $1 million per year to maintain. Less than one in three of the aircraft are reported to be fully operational.

The Tu-160 was the Soviet Union's most potent strategic bomber and its answer to the American B-1. Only six were left in Russia after the USSR's dissolution, and, since the planes are no longer being built, the Russian air force desperately needs most of those now in Ukraine if it is to maintain a viable strategic bomber force.

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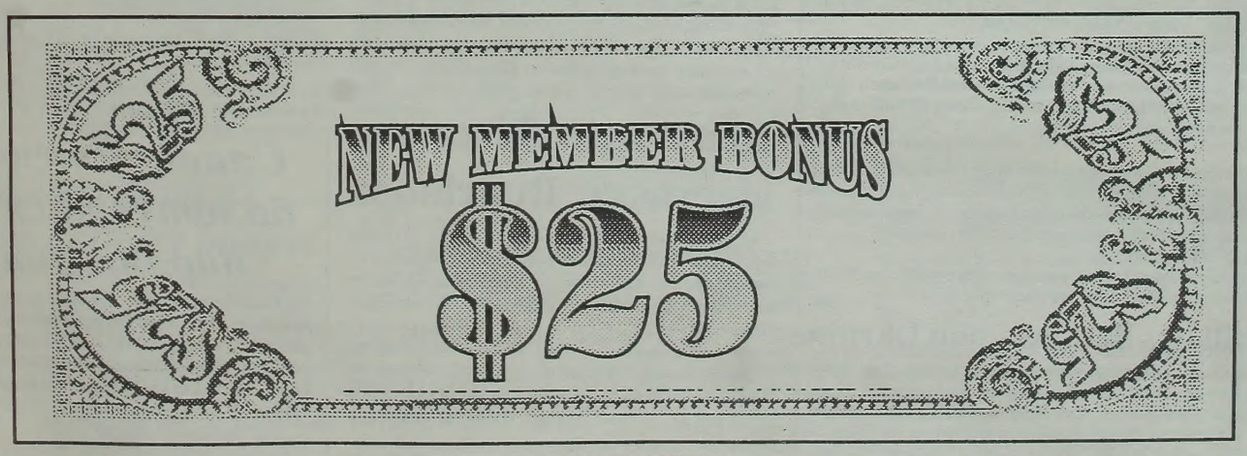

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Українські Вісті видає дво–тижнево *Едмонтон Лайзергрефикс, Відділ Кенейдієн Криптикс Лтд.* під контрактом із видавцями *Українські Вісті Лтд.* Річна передплата $30.00. Всі права застережені. Не можна репродукувати ніяких матеріялів без писаного дозволу видавця. Опінії висловлені в статтях не все відповідають опінії власника, видавця чи редакційної ради.

Candidates need financial support

Voters in Alberta are expected to go to the polls at some time in March. Later this year, federal elections are expected as well.

The Ukrainian community has always participated actively in the Canadian political process at various levels of government and has managed to get many prominent parliamentarians elected in the past. These elections should be no exception.

There are a number of incumbents who are active members of our community that are seeking re-election in Alberta. Among them are Progressive Conservatives Andrew Beniuk and Julius Yankowsky in Edmonton, Ed Stelmach in Vegreville-Viking, Mark Hlady in Calgary and Liberals Gene Zwozdesky in Edmonton and Len Bracko in St. Albert. Not returning will be Liberals Laurence Decore and Al Zariwny. However, Ihor Broda, who has been very active in various Ukrainian organizations has won the Progressive Conservative nomination in Edmonton Castle Downs and stands a good shot at election.

There will be more candidates coming forward before the election is called and among them will be some that are of Ukrainian origin and others with strong links to our community. It is imperative for the Ukrainian community to get as many of its representatives elected — from all parties — in order to have a strong voice in the Legislature.

But simply coming out to vote is not enough. To run a decent campaign, the individual candidates will need financial support. Every candidate in the Alberta elections is only allowed to put in a maximum of $1500 of his or her own money into the constituency campaign. For the rest, they must rely upon donations.

These donation, however, are not as expensive as they seem. That's because any political donations of up to $100 are given a tax credit of 75 percent, which the individual donors will have rebated from their income tax. Thus, a $100 donation effectively puts the donor only $25 out of pocket and is thus, quite reasonable. Yet it goes a long way to helping the individual candidates.

Undoubtedly many of the candidates with strong ties to our community will be approaching individual members for donations in the upcoming weeks. People should be open to these approaches. A large number of $100 donations can add up and can mean the difference between a successful and unsuccessful campaign.

And this is one way in which we can assure that we will have effective representatives for our interests at government levels.

Russia still has designs upon Ukraine

Russian officials have vehemently denied the existence of an October 1996 letter from Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Krylov to presidential foreign policy aide Dmitrii Ryurikov, in which Krylov allegedly termed Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma's foreign policy "anti-Russian and destructive," and called for steps to engineer his ouster. The newspaper which printed is, however, insists it is genuine.

That many people in Ukraine believe the letter is genuine has much to do with the territorial claims that many Russian politicians have made upon Ukraine and the continuing obstinacy of the Russian side in its dealings with Ukraine on such matters as the Black Sea Fleet, Sevastopol and other issues. This leads credence to the belief that Russia has never reconciled itself to Ukraine's independence and will continue to take actions aimed at undermining the Ukrainian state and bringing the country back to its "brotherly" embrace.

Such a policy is extremely dangerous and can lead to a conflict that will have world-wide ramifications.

Земельна реформа в Україні:

Чергова спроба пробити стіну, що вже розхитана і справді може впасти

Віталій Ічнянець

(КБУВ)—Створення з ініціятиви «верхів ще однієї, вже третьої селянської партії — Аграрної на чолі з віце–прем'єром Михайлом Зубцем додала політичної напруги довкола сільськогосподарських проблем і вкрай загострила земельно–виробничі проблеми села. Ціла низка нарад різного рівня відбулися та ще плянуються в січні–лютому нинішнього року. І цим більше уваги сільському виробничникові — тим очевиднішим стає потреба в рішучих змінах. Схоже, вони ось–ось настануть…

Вже й Президент Л. Кучма дозволив собі недвозначно висловитися на підтримку приватно–власницьких відносин, не побоявшись вкотре викликати гнів лівих та «червоної» сільської номенклятури. А минулого понеділка зустрівся з фармерами прем'єр П. Лазаренко, наголошуючи на тому, що в уряді вони можуть розраховувати на підтримку. Очевидно ж, це поки що лише красиві слова, зумовлені прагненням прихилити на свій бік активний сільський електорат. Але кредит обіцянок уже вичерпується. Найближчим часом на розгляд парляменту буде внесено з уряду проєкти важливих законів.

За інформацією голови Державного комітету земельних ресурсів Л. Новаківського, станом на 1 листопада, 80 відсотків сільськогосподарських підприємств одержали (тобто оформили згідно з вимогами нового законодавства) землю у колективну власність. Це понад 24 млн гектарів. Половина цієї землі розпайована між колишніми колгоспниками та пенсіонерами, їм видаються з великими потугами сертифікати на право власности. Але на цьому все й закінчується. Тому земельну реформу вже встигли прозвати паперовою.

Вся справа в тому, що свої земельні паї селяни не можуть відокремити в натурі з колишнього спільного колгоспного поля і не можуть повноцінно розпорядитися ними: правом оренди землі наділені нині лише сільські ради та колективні господарства (колишні колгоспи). Уряд розраховує «проштовхнути» з другої спроби закон «Про оренду землі», де право оренди нічим і ні для кого не обмежуватиметься. Це означає, що умовні земельні паї відразу почнуть «рухатися» в пошуках найправнішого виробника. Якщо це станеться — колишня колгоспна система остаточно згине. Інакше ж фармери (а їх налічується вже 35 тисяч) будуть позбавлені перспектив отримати додаткову землю і будуть приречені на загибель, оскільки мають нерентабельні земельні ділянки (як правило, в межах 30–50 гектарів).

Приватним сільським власникам право на оренду індивідуальних земельних паїв нині набагато важливіше, ніж подолання мораторію на продаж землі. Але й мораторій, схоже, доживає останні місяці. Ситуація в сільському господарстві настільки критична, що уряд змушений буде з усіх сил боротися за надання землі статусу повноцінного товару.

Будова нафтотерміналу на Одещині набирає значіння

(Прес–центр «Південь»)—Як вважають експерти, введення в дію нафтотерміналу поблизу порту Южний, що на Одещині, одержало ще більшу значимість після досягнення домовленостей на урядовому рівні між Україною і республіками Закавказзя про транзит бакинської нафти до Західної Европи по транснаціональному коридору Баку–Тбілісі–Поті–Одеса і далі по нафтопроводу «Дружба».

Під час нещодавнього візиту до Одеси Леонід Кучма зазначив, що і Президент і Уряд України сприяючи залученню необхідних для пуску об'єкту коштів покладають надію на те, що останній не стане черговим технологічним монстром з функціями історичного пам'ятника, а відіграватиме *велику ролю у забезпеченні* держави енергоносіями і приноситиме прибуток у бюджет.

10 річкових і 18 морських портів України приносять 33% прибутку всієї транспортної галузі. Економічна аналіза свідчить, що цей показник можна збільшити на третину лише за рахунок мобілізації ділової активности цих підприємств.

Депутати Київради вимагають відставки Косаківського

(Прес–Рух)—Представники фракції Народного Руху, депутатської групи «Столиця» та «Вибору», а також фракції НДП у Київраді звернулися до киян із проханням виявити розуміння та підтримку у справі боротьби з «князюванням» у місті Леоніда Косаківського. Автори документу наголошують на необхідності негайно звільнити Косаківського з посади голови Київради, зважаючи на наслідки та деструктивну діяльність, яку він провадив протягом кількох років.

«Такий голова, — говориться у зверненні, — компрометує представницьку владу, заважає здійсненню істинного самоврядування, втрачає честь і гідність, використовуючи службове становище для задоволення власних амбіцій і має піти з політичного горизонту».

«Ми здатні і готові обрати діяльного заступника голови і далі працювати на користь киян, захищаючи права та інтереси своїх виборців», — наголошується у зверненні, яке підписали представники депутатської більшості Київради.

Депутати бажають відставки Ворсінова

(Радіо Люкс)—53 народні депутати України підписалися під зверненням до Генерального прокурора України, в якому вимагають від нього «негайно податися у відставку за власним бажанням».

Депутати одночасно звернулися до Президента України Леоніда Кучми з пропозицією усунути Григорія Ворсінова з посади Генпрокурора згідно з пунктом 11–им статті 106–ї Конституції України.

У своєму зверненні депутати вимагають від Ворсінова публічного вибачення перед головою Комісії Верховної Ради по боротьбі з організованою злочинністю та корупцією Григорієм Омельченком «за завдану образу».

«Таким що не відповідає дійсності» названо у зверненні нещодавнє висловлювання Григорія Ворсінова про те, що жодна з кримінальних справ, ініційована Омельченком, «не надійшла до суду».

Слава Стецько балотується до парляменту

(КБУВ)—Лідера Конгресу українських націоналістів Славу Стецько висунуто претендентом у кандидати в народні депутати України від Надвірнянського виборчого округу Івано–Франківської области (замість М. Костицького, нещодавно обраного до першого складу Конституційного суду).

Вибори відбудуться на початку березня. Можливо, пані Стецько стане останнім депутатом парляменту нинішнього скликання (а вона, безумовно, має вагомі шанси), оскільки за рік до чергових виборів заповнення депутатських ваканцій припиняється.

Слава Стецько ще 1994 року мала намір втрутитися у «великі виборчі змагання», але тоді завадили перипетії з оформленням українського громадянства.

Bickering jeopardizes aid

The Ukrainian parliament's row over tax reforms and a 1997 budget may lead to a failure in adopting the budget by the March deadline and could thus endanger a huge foreign aid package, reports Xinhua.

Viktor Suslov, chairman of the Finance and Banking Committee of the Supreme Council, says that the legislature's delay in approving the budget, which called for cuts in social spending and for tax reductions, could invite cutbacks in promised aid.

The overhaul of the tax system and the budget draft, which the government submitted to the parliament in November in a bid to tackle what it called the country's "massive tax evasion", could not be enforced without the US$3.5 billion of foreign aid Ukraine expected to receive in 1997.

"I am concerned not only that Ukraine is not going to receive the entire promised sum, but also that it will still be unable to overcome the crisis after receiving significant help," Suslov said.

The budget, which reduces government subsidies for war veterans and the victims of the 1986 Chornobyl nuclear plant blast, drew fire from leftists in parliament, while education and research spending cuts were opposed by nationalist parties.

Lawmakers also criticized the government's proposed sweeping tax reforms, which would lower the average income tax rate from 42 percent to 34 percent while adding a two percent property tax on individuals and corporations.

Last month, Deputy Prime Minister Viktor Pinzenyk warned that failure to approve the budget, which had been endorsed by the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and 14 other donor nations, could jeopardize some of the expected foreign loans.

The IMF and other international lenders had pushed for measures by the Ukrainian government to stabilize the budget, threatening to suspend loans if the country did not take strong steps to reform its post-Soviet economy.

Baby-theft suspect dismissed

(OMRI)—The trial over the illegal adoption of babies in Ivano-Frankivsk has had political reverberations, NTV and Intelnews reported on Jan. 6.

The deputy head of the Lviv regional administration, Yuriy Zyma, was dismissed from his post by President Leonid Kuchma.

Zyma was charged with complicity in the illegal adoptions, along with the chief doctor of the Lviv Oblast state hospital Bohdan Fedak; another doctor, Volodymyr Doroshenko; and the former head of the oblast administration, Zinovii Ursul.

Between 1992 and 1994, over 130 newborns from the west Ukrainian hospital were sold to Westerners for US$6,000-13,000 each, while the mothers were told their babies had been stillborn.

In all of Ukraine, 802 babies were sold without their parents' consent.

The fate of 630 is still unknown, and Interpol has been looking into the cases.

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Another round over in Romania treaty talks

(OMRI)—Another round of talks on the Romanian-Ukrainian basic treaty ended in Bucharest on Jan. 14.

The negotiators agreed to resume talks in Kyiv after examining proposals submitted by each side.

Before the meeting, Romanian Foreign Minister Adrian Severin said that Bucharest would propose a "compromise package" to settle unresolved issues.

Romania wants the treaty to include a condemnation of the 1939 Ribbentrop-Molotov pact, which ceded Romanian territories to the then Soviet republic of Ukraine.

It also wants guarantees for the 400,000-strong ethnic Romanian minority living in Ukraine.

Romania appears to be under pressure to finalize the treaty before the July NATO summit, at which the first countries to join the alliance are expected to be named. Settling disputes with all neighbors is a condition for NATO integration.

BSF's value dropped by US$60 billion since 1992

(INFOBANK)—The real value of the Black Sea Fleet dropped by US$60 billion between 1992 and 1996 and now stands at US$20 billion at present, says Ukraine's first Navy Commander.

Speaking at a Jan. 28 press conference in Sevastopol, Borys Kozhyn, currently a member of parliament, said this devaluation is due to the fact that the fleet's tactical weapons had been dismantled and taken to Russia and that much of the BSF property has been stolen.

Kozhyn said he hopes that the forthcoming session of parliament will debate the bill on the status of foreign troops in Ukraine. He noted that over 30,000 Russian servicemen stationed in Ukraine enjoy benefits which result in what "outrageously heavy losses" for the Ukrainian budget.

Kozhyn added that there exists a possibility that Kyiv will eventually appeal to international mediators for help — if Ukrainian-Russian talks on the BSF division continue to be deadlocked.

Minister protests meagre military budget

(OMRI)—Defense Minister Oleksandr Kuzmuk, echoing the annual lament of his predecessors following the passage of the state budget, has said that the military has sufficient funds only to pay for the salaries and provisions of the armed forces, Ukrainian radio reported on Jan. 16.

He complained that the role of the army is not limited to "eating porridge and receiving a paycheck" but should include enhancing the security of the country.

He noted that no funds have been allocated for the purchase of military hardware and that the army has had to sell off military assets to cover other needs.

Last year, such sales brought in 32 million hryvnias (C$124 million), most of which was spent on building housing for servicemen and buying military equipment.

Kuzmuk said if the situation does not change, the army will be left with nothing but "national awareness and Kalashnikovs" by 2005.

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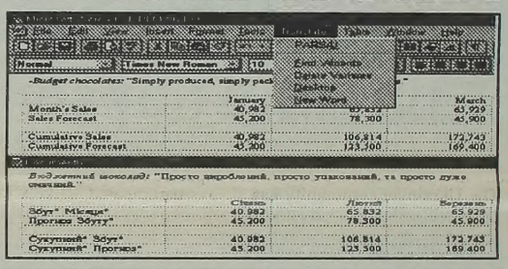

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Newsbriefs

Miners plan march on Kyiv

(OMRI)—The Central Committee of the Ukrainian miners' union has urged the Coal Industry Ministry to insist that this year's budget include subsidies totalling US$2.3 billion for coal-mining enterprises, ITAR-TASS reported on Jan. 27. The parliament is scheduled to debate the 1997 budget on Feb. 4. A trade union spokesman said that miners are planning to march on Kyiv to picket the buildings of the presidential administration and the parliament on Feb. 4-5. Some 2,000 miners are expected to take part in the march.

Teachers plan strike

(Ukrinform)—Educators have decided to call for an all-Ukrainian warning strike on Feb. 5. The two-hour strike will involve mass meetings and rallies of students and teachers to protest the government's failure to keep its commitments involving timely payment of wages to teachers and stipends to students. On Feb. 6, a mammoth rally is scheduled for Kyiv, with participants expected to flock from every administrative region and the autonomous republic of Crimea.

BSF No. 2 linked to mob

(JF Monitor)—Ukraine's Internal Affairs Ministry announced Jan. 14 that it had detained in Sevastopol the deputy commander of the Russian Black Sea Fleet's naval infantry (marines) brigade. Lt. Col. Valeriy Novikov is accused of having sold ammunition and explosives to a violent criminal gang and of having allowed it to practice on a shooting range belonging to the Russian fleet.

Ukraine to buy Iraqi oil

(INFOBANK)—The State Committee on Oil, Gas and the Oil Refining industry along with the Foreign Ministry has decided to send a delegation of Ukrainian businessmen to Iraq to negotiate agreements for oil purchases. In accordance with a United Nations resolution, Iraq is allowed to sell US$2 billion worth of oil in exchange for medicine and food.

Tatars protest broadcast cuts

(OMRI)—Leaders of the Crimean Tatars' unofficial parliament have appealed to Ukrainian and Crimean leaders to reverse sharp cuts in broadcasting in the Tatar language. Tatar leaders are collecting signatures to draw international attention to the problems of Tatars who have returned to Crimea after their nation's mass-expulsion in the 1940s. Some 100,000 repatriated Tatars still do not have housing, and over 250,000 who want to return are not able to because of lack of funds.

Zaporizhia sets record

(OMRI)—Last year, the Zaporizhia nuclear power station produced the most electricity in its 12-year history, Ukrainian radio reported on Jan. 6. The station is the largest in Europe. In December, it generated 3.6 billion kilowatts of electricity.

1996 inflation — 39.7%

(INFOBANK)—According to the Ministry of Statistics, inflation in December 1996 was 0.9%. Total inflation for 1996 was 39.7%. In 1994, inflation reached 401% and in 1995 — 281.7%. The Government wants to bring inflation down to 25% in 1997.

Indexation to resume

(Ukrinform)—The Verkhovna Rada adopted at a first reading the amendments to the Law on Indexation of the Population's Incomes, Jan. 24. Indexation of incomes will be based on the rise in consumer prices as opposed to the previous method which used increases in minimum wages, pensions, and social payments.

Kuchma vetoes media law

(OMRI)—President Leonid Kuchma has vetoed the draft law regulating media coverage of the parliament's activities, Infobank reported on Jan. 13. He said the law contravenes the constitution and gives an unfair advantage to the legislative branch vis-à-vis the executive and the judiciary. He also pointed to the high costs of live TV and radio coverage at the parliament. Kuchma proposed that a law be drafted on mass media coverage of all branches of power.

Crime rate declines

(Ukrinform)—Prosecutor General Hryhoriy Vorsinov says Ukraine's crime rate declined by six percent during 1996. Speaking at a Jan. 15 press conference, he dismissed claims by some politicians that Ukraine has one of the highest crime rates among the former Soviet republics.

Women's Party holds congress

(Ukrinform)—The Ukraine's Women Party held its constituent congress in Kyiv on Jan. 18. The Party's primary organizations represented 17 regions of Ukraine. Congress delegates discussed and approved the program and statute of the Party which is headed by Dr. Alina Komarova, director of the "Human Problems" research institute.

Second Antarctic expedition departs

(Ukrinform)—Ukraine's second expedition to Antarctica left Odesa, Jan. 18, on board the Ernst Krenkel research ship to replace the first group of Ukrainian explorers at the Academician Vernadsky polar station.

Shevchenko Institute marks fifth

(Ukrinform)—President Leonid Kuchma has sent a congratulatory message to students and staff of the Taras Shevchenko University's Institute of Ukrainian Studies on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of its founding. The message was delivered by the Chief of the Presidential Administration, Yevhen Kushnarev. Deputy Prime Minister also Ivan Kuras attended the ceremony.

Russian objectives thwarted at CIS meeting

(JF Monitor/OMRI)—A regular meeting of prime ministers from the CIS countries, held Jan. 17 in Moscow, was marked by "sharp exchanges of views," according to CIS executive secretary Ivan Korotchenya.

Georgia, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan rejected the main document, a medium-term "Concept of CIS Economic Integration" prepared by the Russian side.

Ukraine introduced amendments to the document, returning it for rewriting and further discussion at follow-up meetings.

At least five countries — Ukraine, Moldova, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan — adhered to their usual position of not discussing military and "political-military" issues or supranational institutions.

Foreign Minister Hennadiy Udovenko criticized the draft concept's proposals for unified CIS trade, labor, transport, customs, and currency systems, saying they contradict the Ukrainian constitution.

Ukraine signed eight agreements, mainly of a commercial and technical character. But Kyiv declined to sign eight politically-colored agreements prepared by Moscow, including accords on common rules of travel for CIS countries' citizens to non-CIS countries, formation of CIS capital and labor markets, development of CIS transport, customs, currency, and education systems, and operation of the CIS television company MIR.

Prime Minister Pavlo Lazarenko reaffirmed that his country would not sign documents which contravene its sovereignty, constitution, and legislation.

In a bow to Russia's ailing President Boris Yeltsin, Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma proposed from afar that Russia's chairmanship of the CIS be extended for another year. Some months ago, before Yeltsin's illness had become manifest, Ukraine and Uzbekistan had begun canvassing support for implementing the rotation rule, which Moscow had disregarded in monopolizing the chairmanship of CIS bodies.

National democrats form electoral alliance

(Ukrinform)—The All-Ukrainian Gathering of national-democratic forces was held at the National Opera House of Ukraine, Jan. 28.

It had been arranged for the 78th anniversary of Ukraine's reunion and initiated by the National Council of the Ukrainian Intelligentsia Congress. Leaders of the Ukrainian Intelligentsia Congress, Rukh, All-Ukrainian Society "Prosvita" ("Enlightenment") and All-Ukrainian Veterans' Association proclaimed the setting up of a joint All-Ukrainian electoral alliance.

They called upon all national-democratic forces and political and public organizations of democratic orientation to join the alliance with the aim of winning the next parliamentary elections.

As noted by chairman of Rukh, People's Deputy Vyacheslav Chornovil, the alliance has been set up with a clear-cut orientation for a single faction at the Verkhovna Rada whose top priority will be the resolution of problems of social and economic nature.

Chornovil said the implementation of the idea would prevent a situation analogous to 1994 when the national-democratic forces lost the elections and "Ukraine has got an anarchist and leftist parliament".

Final IMF loan drawing expected soon

(RFE/RL)—Sources at the International Monetary Fund in Washington say the ninth and final drawing of Ukraine's stand-by loan of around US$880 million could be approved as early as the first week of February.

The last tranche of around $92 million is under final review by IMF staff experts and should go to the Board of Executive Directors for approval that week, the sources say.

Ukraine is currently negotiating a much more ambitious extended fund facility that could make around $3 billion available to Kyiv over the next three years. Ukrainian government and IMF officials are hoping to have the new loan package and its attached program of economic reforms ready for signing in February when the stand-by loan program expires.

However, IMF Managing Director Michel Camdessus has cautioned Kyiv that continued drawings from the IMF depend on Ukraine's continued adherence to agreed reform measures. Among those measures, Camdessus wrote in a letter to President Leonid Kuchma, is the need for a government budget to be in place, including changes in the taxation system.

There has been a delay in parliamentary approval of the 1997 budget over tax law changes.

An IMF spokesman confirmed that Camdessus had written to Kuchma, but would not disclose details of the letter.

Conference marks anniversary of U.S. relations

(Ukrinform)—The Washington Center for International Strategic Studies was the venue for a conference, attended by officers of the US National Security Council, prominent political scientists and business executives, marking the fifth anniversary of US-Ukrainian diplomatic relations.

Speaking at the conference Valeriy Kuchynsky, the Ukrainian Embassy's advisor-envoy, focused on US-Ukrainian strategic partnership.

Carlos Pascuale, NSC senior director, referred to the US-Ukrainian partnership as a frank dialogue aimed to facilitate Ukraine's accedence to the world's club of democratic and prosperous nations.

In addition to bilateral relations the conference also discussed topical international and regional security issues including NATO's relations with Ukraine.

Pascuale stated the US Administration's support for the idea of NATO and Ukraine maintaining a regular dialogue on security matters proceeding from the 16+1 principle.

The US official also praised Ukraine's role in making NATO include a provision on safeguards barring nuclear weapons and foreign troops from deployment and stationing in nations joining NATO as an item in the December Communique by NATO foreign ministries.

Shcherbak meets with working group in Houston

(Ukrinform)—The U.S. Chamber of Commerce Ukrainian-American working group has met in Texas, as part of preparations for the first session of the Kuchma-Gore Ukrainian-American intergovernmental commission.

The working group consisted of representatives of 40 of the United States' leading companies and was attended by Ukraine's Ambassador to the US Yuriy Shcherbak.

The ambassador met with senior officials of Shell Oil and Huffco, who are studying prospects for the development of the Ukrainian fuel and energy complex.

Shcherbak also delivered addresses on the economic situation as well as the investment climate in Ukraine at the Petroleum Club and at a meeting of the Council on World Politics in Houston.

The Ukrainian ambassador also met with the city's mayor, visited the Houston medical center, where he discussed a program of joint Ukrainian-American research aimed at eliminating the aftermath of the Chornobyl nuclear disaster and the Lyndon Johnson space center, where he was familiarized with the training programs of Ukrainian astronauts.

In an interview with the Houston Chronicle, Shcherbak dwelt on the progress of economic reforms and introduction of a new national currency in Ukraine.

Shcherbak completed his visit to Texas by meeting with Governor George Bush Jr., who expressed support for the idea of stronger business, scientific, and cultural ties with Ukraine and presented the Ukrainian ambassador with a certificate of honorary citizenship.

Ukraine, U.S. scientists cooperate on new reactor

(Ukrinform)—Scientists at the Kharkiv Institute of Physics and the United States National Laboratory in Los Alamos have begun joint development of a new reactor for transportation of radioactive waste.

The project is aimed at converting harmful substances into harmless or short-lived isotopes that will quickly disintegrate into non-radioactive substances.

In view of the wide range of possible applications of the project, nuclear research scientists from Russia, Sweden, and the Czech Republic have joined in.

Simultaneously, scientists with the Kharkiv institute and counterparts from the United States Livermore laboratory have begun work on joint development of a safe underground nuclear reactor.

Crimean parliament votes to oust Demydenko

Collision course with Kyiv continues

(OMRI/JF Monitor/InfoBank)—The Crimean parliament voted to oust Arkadiy Demydenko's government by 52 votes to 19, Ukrainian and international agencies reported on Jan. 23.

The official reason for the motion was a new law that modifies the name of the Crimean government to that of "council of ministers."

Demydenko, who is backed by the Ukrainian leadership, said the vote was illegal and that only the Ukrainian president can dismiss the Crimean government.

He said he would protest to President Leonid Kuchma and the Constitutional Court.

Kuchma's press service said on Jan. 22 that he would oppose Demydenko's dismissal. On Jan. 28 he vetoed the Crimean parliament's decision.

The President said that the Crimean Parliament exceeded its constitutional authority because dismissals and appointments of Crimean prime ministers are to be agreed with Ukraine's President.

That same day the Krym sociological center published results of public opinion poll which questioned 460 residents of Symferopol and 98 experts (civil servants, journalists, political analysts) on the parliament's actions. Altogether, 9.3% of the residents and 7.9% of the experts supported the parliament's demand for Demydenko's resignation, while 17.4% of the residents and 40.3% of the experts disagreed. The rest were undecided

It was the fifth time in three years that the autonomous parliament voted to oust the peninsula's government.

Tensions between Demydenko's government and the pro-Russian parliament have been high for some time.

Jan. 22 pro-Ukrainian and Tatar deputies in the Crimean parliament failed in a new attempt to oust speaker Vasel Kyselyov.

That same day Kuchma overruled by a special decree the Crimean parliament's laws on payments for land and land-use. He said these laws contradicted the Constitution and laws of Ukraine.

A week earlier, Crimea's parliament, the Supreme Soviet, voted down changes to the autonomous region's draft constitution designed to overcome the Ukrainian parliament's objections.

Ukraine's parliament rejected the Nov. 1 1995 draft last year because of provisions giving Crimea the right to determine Sevastopol's status and to grant citizenship, giving Crimeans the right to dual citizenship, and giving Russian the status of an official language and the language of business in Crimea.

But the Supreme Soviet refused to make many of the changes.

It did agree to change the name of the republic to Autonomous Republic of Crimea (instead of Republic of Crimea), though it insisted on changing upper-case "Autonomous" to lower-case "autonomous."

But it refused to change some of the most contentious articles. Rejecting Kyiv's wording, according to which "the special status of Sevastopol is defined by Ukrainian law," the Supreme Soviet voted to keep its original, that "the status of Sevastopol as an integral part of Crimea is regulated by corresponding legislation."

The Supreme Soviet also retained a contentious article stating that Crimea's borders may be altered only with the consent of the Crimean parliament.

It also rejected the formulation on citizenship agreed by the Ukrainian/Crimean working group, according to which "citizens of Ukraine permanently resident in Crimea are citizens of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea," and insisted instead on retaining its original, reading: "Crimea has its own internal citizenship. Every citizen of Crimea is also a citizen of Ukraine... Citizens of Crimea have the right to dual citizenship."

Ukrainian law forbids dual citizenship except in exceptional circumstances, and Kyiv is determined to rule it out in Crimea, where the majority of the population are ethnic Russians.

Meanwhile, Kuchma asked the Constitutional Court to overturn Crimean legislation imposing taxes on barter trades, which he claims contradicts Ukrainian law.

Kyiv is also mulling other ways of reducing the powers of the Crimean parliament.

One would involve the introduction of a bi-cameral legislature. The lower house would continue to be elected, as at present, on a first-past-the post basis, resulting in a Russian-dominated legislature.

But the upper house would be made up of equal numbers (33 percent each) of Russian, Tatar and Ukrainian senators. The upper house would have a casting vote.

This would enable Tatar and Ukrainian senators consistently to outvote Russian ones, even though ethnic Russians make up 64 percent of the population of the peninsula.

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Poland, Ukraine to sign reconciliation agreement

(OMRI)—Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma and his Polish counterpart Aleksander Kwasniewski announced at a press conference in Warsaw that a declaration on reconciliation would be signed when Kuchma returns to Poland in May, Polish media reported on Jan. 24.

Kwasniewski reiterated Poland's support for Ukraine's efforts to integrate into European structures and the Central European Free Trade Agreement, and said NATO should conclude a partnership treaty with Ukraine similar to the one the alliance intends to sign with Russia.

The two presidents agreed that isolating Belarus would only worsen the situation there and endanger stability in Europe.

The two countries' industry ministers signed a memorandum on trade liberalization similar to the one Poland signed with Russia last November, and Kuchma received an award from the Polish Business Club for boosting bilateral trade.

Polish-Ukrainian trade was estimated at US$1.4 billion in 1996.

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Lazarenko promises support for farmers

(Ukrinform)—The government will back farmers and collective agricultural enterprises with material, technical and financial assistance to a full extent, said Prime Minister Pavlo Lazarenko speaking at a meeting with leaders and sponsors of the farmers' movement.

The meeting, attended by members of the government, heads of ministries and departments involved with resolving the economic problems of the agrarian sector, was held in Kyiv Jan. 20.

Participants noted that the main obstacle to the growth of the independent farm sector is the unavailability of land. Out of 6 million hectares of land reserves, only 820,00 have been allocated for establishing new farms, about 14 percent of the total. An average-sized farm amounts to 23 ha.

According to Lazarenko, the problem is caused by the lack of an appropriate legal base for land ownership, as well as the conservatism of regional state administrations and land departments.

He said farms can be expanded not only through land reserves, but by using principles of sharing and introducing the land purchase-selling mechanism.

Constitutional Court comes into being

(OMRI/Ukrinform)—Ukraine's new Constitutional Court formally came into being on Jan. 3.

The head of the court, Vitaliy Boiko, met with President Leonid Kuchma to mark the occasion.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Kuchma said most members of the Ukrainian society reacted positively to the creation of the court

So far, 16 out of the court's 18 judges have been appointed. The remaining two are be appointed by the parliament, which has the right to appoint one-third of the court's justices.

The same day, Kuchma submitted his first case to be examined by the court. The case involves the accounting department of the parliament.

In a bill passed July 11, 1996, Parliament set up an Accounting Chamber as a permanent body of state finance and economic control, which is responsible to it. Kuchma vetoed the bill on grounds that the powers of the Chamber exceed the Constitution, but Parliament overrode the veto on Oct. 1.

Kharkiv - da, Donetsk - ni

(OMRI)—The eastern region of Kharkiv voted to give the Russian language equal status with Ukrainian as of the beginning of the year, ITAR-TASS reported on Jan. 7.

At the same time, the administration in the predominantly Russian-speaking eastern region of Donetsk took the opposite position, deciding that the official language in the region's administration and business would be solely Ukrainian.

Under the Ukrainian constitution, only Ukrainian has state status as a language, but regions with sizable minorities speaking other languages can grant official status to that language.

Energy situation said critical

(OMRI)—Energy Minister Yuriy Bochkarov made a special appeal to the Ukrainian public on Jan. 13, Ukrainian Radio reported. He warned that energy supplies are at a critical level and called on everyone to lower their consumption of energy by 20%. The energy production potential of the Dnipropetrovsk hydroelectric station, which supplies water to one-third of Ukraine's territory, has been almost completely used up. Bochakov said one of the biggest problems has been the indebtedness of consumers. Ukrainians owe 2.5-2.7 billion hryvnias (C$1.9 billion) for energy, and Bochakov warned that those who do not pay will not receive energy supplies.

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Kuchma receives Apostolic Nuncio

(Ukrinform)—President Leonid Kuchma received the Vatican's Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Antonio Franco at the latter's request, Jan. 22.

The Holy See's representative to Ukraine conveyed to President Kuchma a greeting message by Pope John Paul II who takes keen interest in Ukraine's life. As underscored by the Apostolic Nuncio, the Catholic Church has always professed principles of peace, cooperation and fraternity in relations between peoples.

According to Franco, Pope John Paul II has warm recollections of his Vatican meeting with Kuchma and dreams about visiting Ukraine where many faithful Catholics live.

Ukraine's President conveyed his cordial wishes to John Paul II and expressed his profound respect for the Supreme Pontiff. He also voiced his hope for a meeting with the Pope saying that proper conditions for the Catholic Church Head's visit should be created.

Yushchenko warns of tax crisis

(The Rukh Insider)—The Chairman of the National Bank of Ukraine Viktor Yushchenko provided an indication that the government's tinkering with Ukraine's tax system is placing last autumn's monetary reform in jeopardy.

At a meeting on Jan. 15 with the heads of parliamentary factions and groups Yushchenko said recent changes to Ukraine's tax system have caused a drop in the amount of monthly tax receipts from 50 million hryvnia to 15 million (C$10.7 million).

The changes Yushchenko had in mind were a restructuring of enterprise tax debts brought into effect as of Jan. 1.

The payment of most of this debt has been spread across ten years while a portion has been forgiven completely.

As a result, according to Yushchenko, firms have "relaxed" about paying taxes that are currently due and a severe drop in the exchange rate for the hryvnia can be expected in several weeks.

Rada to consider reappointment

(Ukrinform/InfoBank)—National Bank of Ukraine Chairman Viktor Yushchenko, whose term of office will expire on January 26, is to act as chairman of the bank until Feb. 5. A decision to this effect was adopted by the Ukrainian Verkhovna Rada on Jan. 23. Clarifying the Rada decision, the chairman of the Parliamentary Commission for Finance and Banking, Viktor Suslov, said that the parliament is unable to consider President Leonid Kuchma's proposal to reappoint Yushchenko before Jan. 26, when his term will expire, since Yushchenko is currently on a working trip. Upon his return, parliament will review the request.

World Bank slams corruption

(OMRI)—World Bank President James Wolfenson sent a letter to President Leonid Kuchma at the beginning of the year criticizing corruption within the Ukrainian government, Ukrainian Radio reported on Jan. 8. The same day, Deputy Prime Minister Viktor Pynzenyk admitted that the problem of government corruption exists, noting that international criticism has begun because of increased foreign investment in the country. He said budgetary laws currently under review would limit the opportunities for corruption in the government. He also called for the implementation of tax reform.

Newsbriefs

Bug region admitted to association

(Ukrinform)—The "Bug" Polish-Ukrainian transborder organization has been unanimously admitted to the Association of European Regions. The "Bug EuroRegion" includes Volyn Oblast and the Chelm, Lublin, Tarnobuzez and Zamostje provinces of Poland. Currently, there over 250 Euroregions, of which over 90 have been admitted to the Association of European Regions. The Carpathian EuroRegion was Ukraine's first one in the Association, which was founded in 1983.

Crimean deputy resigns in protest

(OMRI)—Oleksandr Bobrinev, a deputy from Sevastopol, has resigned, saying Kyiv is pursuing a policy that is increasing tension over Sevastopol and the Black Sea Fleet, ITAR-TASS reported on Jan. 4. Bobrinev said President Leonid Kuchma and parliamentary speaker Oleksandr Moroz are reorienting the country toward the West and moving closer to a radical nationalist position. His resignation is retroactive to the beginning of the year.

Kuchma greets Kravchuk on birthday

(Ukrinform)—President Leonid Kuchma congratulated his predecessor on his birthday, Jan. 10. Kuchma sent Leonid Kravchuk a telegram in which he praised his former rival for his contribution in building a sovereign and independent Ukraine. He referred to Kravchuk as a solid politician whose experience is serving the cause of formation and consolidation of Ukrainian society.

Belarus to buy Ukrainian butter

(INFOBANK)—Belarus will buy 600 tons of butter in Ukraine in 1997, says Vladimir Bokach, economic advisor to the Belarusian embassy in Kyiv. He said Belarus is also interested in more purchases of Ukrainian butter in future. Food supplies started to fall in Belarus following President Alexandr Lukashenka's ban on domestic food price increases. Consequently, production of certain items became unprofitable for Belarusian manufacturers because the cost exceeded prices.

Religious conference held in Zaporizhia

(Ukrinform)—An international conference dedicated to the 2000th anniversary of the birth of Christ ended in Zaporizhia, Jan. 13.

The conference, which was the first event to be organized by the United Nations international committee for commemoration of the 2000th anniversary of the birth of Christ, of which Metropolitan Volodymyr Slobodan is the honorary chairman, opened on Jan. 10.

In an interview with DINAU/UKRINFORM, Vasyl Sereda, deputy chairman of the Ukrainian State Committee for Religious Affairs, said that the Ukrainian intelligentsia will prepare to commemorate the 2000th anniversary of the birth of Christ together with the Clergy of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. He disclosed that the first preparatory measures were earmarked during the conference.

Delegates to the conference, including over 200 scientists from Ukraine, Germany, the United States, China, and senior clergy of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, discussed the influence of the church on economic and ecological development as well as the similarities and difference between Church traditions and medicine.

Participants in the conference also discussed such issues as the influence of religion on mankind, mankind's benefits from the teachings of Jesus Christ the Messiah, the possibility of uniting Ukrainian Christians of different orientations and the spiritual and moral aspects of the Ukrainian education system.

Chairman appointed for religious committee

(Ukrinform)—Jan. 24, Deputy Prime Minister Ivan Kuras, who is in charge of the Government's humanitarian policies, held a ceremony in Kyiv to formally introduce Viktor Bondarenko as the newly appointed chairman of the State Committee for matters of religions.

Speaking in an interview with DINAU/UKRINFORM, he said an important goal is to make the nation unified in terms of its single Christian Church by the Nativity's 2000th anniversary.

According to Bondarenko, his earlier meetings with the top priests of Ukraine's Christian Churches make him firmly believe that their eventual reunion is quite possible.

Ministry to develop system for emergencies

(Ukrinform)—The Ministry of Emergency Situations and Protection Against the Aftermath of the Chornobyl Nuclear Disaster is developing an information analysis system that will enable specialists to forecast occurrence of emergency situations and natural disasters.

According to the ministry, about 74,000 people died in Ukraine in the first 11 months of 1996 as a result of injuries sustained in accidents and other emergency situations.

Minister Valeriy Kalchenko told a ministerial board meeting on Jan. 24 that the state-owned information analysis system, which the ministry intends to create, will also be responsible for analyzing the progress of work aimed at eliminating the aftermath of the Chornobyl nuclear accident.

He said this is a priority since Ukraine currently does not have a well coordinated system for gathering and processing information about the causes and occurrence of emergencies. The ministry is expected to complete the project by the year 2000.

Kalchenko emphasized the need for adoption of a law on protection of the population and territories against emergency situations, a law on the status of rescuers, and a law on the National Civil Defense. He also called for establishment of a system for prevention of emergencies.

He said that some of the laws have been drafted and will soon be submitted to Cabinet for approval.

Rada ratifies European convention

(Ukrinform)—The Ukrainian Verkhovna Rada ratified the European Convention on Prevention of Torture and Inhumane Practices or Punishments, Jan. 24, the last day of the parliament's sixth session.

Ratification of the convention is one of the obligations which Ukraine adopted upon admission into the Council of Europe in 1995.

It is the sixth European convention thus far ratified by the Ukrainian parliament.

Ratification of the convention will simplify the task of the Ukrainian delegation to the CE's Parliamentary Assembly which will take place in Strasbourg from Jan. 27 to 31. One of the items on the Parliamentary assembly's agenda is the fulfillment of the obligations which Ukraine and Russia undertook upon admission into the CE.

During parliamentary deliberations on the convention, doubts were raised as to whether Ukraine is capable of fully implementing the terms of the convention under the present economic conditions in the country.

Military exercises planned for Crimea

(Ukrinform)—Marines from Greece, Turkey, the United States, France, Germany, Italy, Romania, Bulgaria, Russia, Great Britain, and Ukraine will participate in military exercises code-named "Sea Breeze-97" in August.

The exercises will be held near Crimea. Observers from Georgia and Albania are also expected.

According to the press center of the Ukrainian Navy, about 10 Ukrainian warships are expected to participate in the exercises. The Ukrainian naval base in Donuzlayev is expected to be used.

Specialists say Sea Breeze-97 should serve as a good school for coordinating the international humanitarian operations. Three conferences, two in Kyiv and one in the Crimea, are expected to be held in preparation for the exercises.

Term rumors denied

(OMRI)—President Leonid Kuchma's spokesman, Dmytro Markov, has dismissed reports about extending the term in office of both the president and the parliament as "political rumors," Ukrainian TV reported on Jan. 28. Markov noted that the president believes that postponing the presidential and parliamentary elections would damage the country's democratic development and worsen confrontation between political forces. Rukh spokesman Vitaliy Shevchenko said calls to extend the powers of the parliament and president until 2000 or 2001 are unconstitutional and a "political intrigue." Centrists from the Yednist faction have recently made such calls.

Trade unions plan party

(OMRI)—Oleksander Stoyan, chairman of the Ukrainian Federation of Trade Unions (FTU), has announced that the unions may create their own party, UNIAN reported on Jan. 28. He added that the unions will be more active in future elections and want to win enough seats in the parliament to set up their own faction. Stoyan noted that the FTU is undecided about supporting any of the existing parties. Parliamentary speaker Oleksander Moroz has urged the trade unions to increase their political power by establishing contact with parties that "act in tandem with the trade unions."

Ukrainians say living standards still declining

(OMRI)—An opinion poll asking 1,200 Ukrainians about their living standards in 1996 showed the majority still feel their standards are declining, Den reported on Dec. 31.

Of the respondents, 37% said their living standards declined significantly in 1996, 33% said they declined somewhat; and 23% said their standards did not change.

Only 6% said their standards improved somewhat; and 1% said they improved significantly.

The average wage in the first 11 months of 1996 was 144.76 hryvnias (C$105), but real wages fell by 23% over the same period owing to inflation.

Official unemployment levels remained at a low 1.1%, but real unemployment is believed to be at least nine time higher.

Prices rose by 38.5% over the first eleven months of the year.

More dying than being born

(INFOBANK)—During the last six years 1.2 million more people died in Ukraine, than were born, says Public Health Minister Andriy Serdiuk.

Speaking at at the Jan. 23 meeting of the Ministry's Collegium, he said this amounts to the equivalent of the total population of the city of Sumy.

Over 6 million in Ukraine suffer from heart and vascular diseases, 1.2 million from mental disorders, 0.74 million from oncological diseases, 0.72 million from alcoholism, 0.1 million from tuberculosis and 56,000 are drug addicts.

More than 1.5 million Ukrainians are disabled. Every year 2.2 million undergo surgical operations. In 1996 8.5 million caught infectious diseases, according to the Ministry.

Government agrees to fund some internment commemorative panels

(UCCLA)—On Jan. 23, the Chairman of Ukrainian Canadian Civil Liberties Association (UCCLA) John Gregorovich and the Director of Special Projects, Borys Sydoruk met in Hull, Quebec with Jean Boutet, Policy Advisor, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Canadian Heritage.

Also present was George Ingram, Director, Policy, Legislation and Government Relations Branch, National Historic Sites Directorate, Canadian Heritage, Parks Canada.

During the meeting, which lasted one hour, Boutet and Ingram agreed that the Government of Canada, through Parks Canada, would place historic panels in Jasper National Park, Yoho National Park and possibly Revelstoke National Park, commemorating the internment of Ukrainian Canadians as enemy aliens at these sites during Canada's first national internment operations of 1914-1920.

The delegation reminded the government that on June 8, 1993, Jean Chrétien, then leader of the Opposition, promised the Ukrainian Canadian Community: "The Liberal party understands your concern...we support your efforts to secure the redress of Ukrainian Canadians' claims arising from their internment and loss of freedoms during the First World War... we will continue to monitor the situation closely and seek to ensure that the government honours its promise."

Vohon Malanka a hit

Edmonton's Vohon Ukrainian Dance Ensemble proved its drawing power as it sold out the Malanka at Jasper Place Lodge with 550 people attenting the supper, Jan. 11. "The hotel was overwhelmed and ecstatic by the turnout from the Ukrainian community," said Vohon spokesperson Tammy Komarnisky. Also performing were the Hoosli Ukrainian Folk Ensemble from Winnipeg. The Malanka was part of a weekend of activities put on at the hotel Jan. 10-12. Along with the Saturday Malanka, participants also enjoyed a Friday night reception and Pryvit performance, a Sunday brunch and a variety of other activities. Pictured above: Vohon performs the hopak.

Fourth John Sopinka Award for Excellence

(CUSF) The fourth John Sopinka Award for Excellence has been awarded to Roman Didenko, a fourth year student of history at Luhansk Pedagogical Institute in Ukraine.

Established in 1988 by the Chair of Ukrainian Studies Foundation of Toronto, the award is named for Justice John Sopinka of the Supreme Court of Canada.

Didenko was born in Poltava and is the first student from a Ukrainian university to receive this award.

The awarding of the scholarship to Didenko has made it possible for him to take up a full year Residency at the Centre for Conflict Resolution of Saint Paul University, in Ottawa. During his residency, Roman will be trained to become a teacher/instructor of conflict resolution and after his return to Ukraine in 1997, he will complete his degree at Luhansk Pedagogical Institute and then begin training Ukrainian students in conflict resolution.

Jodi Leforte, of the US Peace Corps, wrote a letter of recommendation for Roman, as follows: "As his professor, I am impressed by his inquisitiveness and well-developed opinions. I instruct him in English and I am overjoyed by his eloquent usage of the that language. Not many people are capable of making their opinions and beliefs understood in a foreign language. Ukraine needs a leader like Roman, who leads not for his own self interest, but for the interests of the people."

Previous John Sopinka Scholarship recipients include Prof. Lubomyr Luciuk formerly of Queen's University, Prof. Bohdan Kordan of the University of Saskatchewan and Orest Babij, a graduate of Royal Military College, now at Oxford University.

Didenko's professors in Luhansk and his American professors recommended him for the 1996 Canada-Ukraine Parliamentary Program for university students from Ukraine. Program Director Ihor Bardyn, speaking about Didenko said: "It is students and youth of Ukraine who can act as the catalyst to turn Ukraine into a democratic and civil society. Vaclav Havel, the Czech President, wrote that "the key to former communist countries' passage to democracy is the creation of a "civil society" in which the rule of law checks the human impulse to act out fantasies of hatred. Democracy, Havel points out, is not enough".

Briefly

Lviv Museum admitted

(Ukrinform)—The Lviv Museum has been admitted to the Paris-headquartered International Council of Museums, ICOM for short. Earlier, four Kyiv museums joined ICOM, which has some 12,000 members in 150 nations.

Ancient Ukrainian art to be displayed

(Ukrinform)—A collection of ancient Ukrainian art collected from six Ukrainian museums will go on display at New York's Metropolitan Museum on March 3. Works from 23 other countries will also be on display. Addressing a press conference on Jan. 24, Deputy Minister of Arts and Culture Leonid Novokhatko said that the exhibition presents an opportunity to display Ukraine's cultural legacy.

Rotaru awarded

(Ukrinform)—President Leonid Kuchma attended a gala concert in Kyiv Jan. 26 which consummated the 10th All-Ukrainian Festival of modern songs. Singer Sofia Rotaru was awarded a presidential prize marking the 25 years of her career as a performer. The two other presidential awards went to singers Vasyl Zinkevych and Vitaliy Bilonozhko.

Canada World Youth now working with Ukraine

For 25 years Canada World Youth (CWY) has organized youth exchange programs with more than 50 countries around the world. These exchangers are intended to help young people develop: the skills to attain meaningful employment; the motivation and ability to become community leaders; and the capacity to work internationally in an effective and ethical way.

In the past three years CWY has expanded its programming to the transitional societies of Central and Eastern Europe. In the Prairies, CWY has had a successful partnership with the Water Supply Foundation, a highly respected Polish non-governmental organization.

For the past year, CWY has been meeting with Ukrainian organizations to develop an exchange with the Ukraine. For the 1997-98 program year, there will be Ukrainian youth integrated into the CWY exchange with Poland in order to have Ukrainian partner organizations experience the program directly, with the intention that there be a CWY - Ukraine exchange the following year.

CWY is currently recruiting staff to work with exchanges and is interested in persons who have some background in Eastern European Studies and languages.

CWY is a non-governmental organization established in 1971, funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), corporate and private donations. For further information please call the Canada World Youth Prairies Regional Office at 403-432-1877. Or check out the CWY home page at<jcmcwy@web.apc.org>

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За державний гімн — до суду

(Прес–Рух)—Члена Народного Руху України Степана Лазара затримано запорізькою міліцією за... спів державного гімну України. Це сталося у Запоріжжі під час пікетування рухівцями міжнародної конференції, яку проводила тут православна церква Московського патріярхату. Заступник начальника Орджонікідзенського райвідділу внутрішніх справ Віктор Ровенський вважає, що Степан Лазар порушив статтю 182 Адміністративного кодексу, що виявилося «в криках та співах у громадських місцях». Після складення звинувачувальних актів Степана Лазара було відпущено «чекати повістки до суду».

Перший Курінь УПС ім. Олександра та Степана Тисовських повідомляє, що дня 31–го грудня на 86–му році життя, відійшов на вічну Ватру у Ст. Петербурґу, на Фльориді Член Куреня, Курінних Старшин та Курінний пластун, сеньор керівництва

с. п. ТАРАС ДУРБАК (ЩАПА)

Десятилітній, у 1921 році, вступив у Львові до Куреня Пластунів Юнаків ім. Петра Сагайдачного і виконував різні діловодства у Курінній Старшині.

Студентом, був членом Куреня Старших Пластунів «Орден Залізної Остроги» та секретарем Верховної Пластової Команди. До Першого Куреня УПС вступив у 1946 році в Німеччині. У Пласті в ЗСА займав різні пости від зв'язкового Куреня Юнаків у Нюарку, до заступника Голови Крайової Пластової Старшини та Голови Крайової Таборової Комісії на ЗСА, до члена Головної Пластової Ради, Головного Булавного Пластунів та Референта Вишколу Головної Пластової Булави, редактора журналу «В дорогу з юнацтвом».

Нагороджений пластовими орденами «Свастикою заслуги», Святого Юрія в золоті та «Срібної Сокири».

За активну працю у Церковній Раді Української Католицької Церкви св. Івана Хрестителя в Нюарку, ЗСА, іменований Лицарем ордену св. Григорія Папи. Брав визначну участь у стараннях за беатифікацію Слуги Божого Митрополита Андрея Шептицького.

Покійний Друг Щапа був прикладом старанного виконування пластових обов'язків та совісного придержування приписів і в тому дусі законности й порядку впливав на своїх друзів та на молоді пластові покоління.

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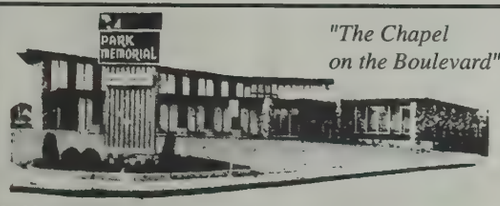

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FAMILY OWNED AND OPERATED SINCE 1941

Зліва на право: паланковий отаман саскачеванських курінів Тарас Байда, писар значковий Остап Скрипник (онук Патріярха Мстислава), сотник отець Богдан Демчук, хорунжий Лаврентій Хруц, та підхорунжий Йосиф Байда.

Українське Козацтво святкує свій празник

о. Богдан Демчук

Українське Козацтво скликало свою Раду 14–го жовтня року в Україні. Того ж дня, на свято Покрови Пресвятої Богородиці, Українське Козацтво ім. Байда–Вишневецького в Канаді так само відзначили цю дату. Козаки 43–го куріня разом із питомцями Пансіону Іларіона в Саскатуні зайшли до каплиці Преподобного Іларіона Митрополита Київського, щоб поклонитися та помолитися Пресвятій Богородиці.

Богослуження відправив о. Богдан Демчук, а парафіяни співали під проводом Альберта Качковського. Під час проповіді о. парох розповів про Покрову та значіння святкування її серед усього українського люду. У цьому святочному слові Пресвята Богородиця згадувалася як Небесна Опікунка козацтва, українського війська і всього побожного люду, що сягає своїми витоками ще в княжу добу, в нашу велику та героїчну історію, в добу української державности.

На цій святій Службі Божій були присутні члени Українського Вільного Козацтва ім. Байди–Вишневецького (курінь 43–ій). Вони прийшли скласти подяку Пресвятій Богородиці за те, що допомогла їм зберегти Святу Віру, і що покрила їх своїм Чесним Омофором. Козаки принесли до посвяти нові хоругви та ікони Покрови Пресвятої Богородиці. Ікони були надіслані з м. Калуш і ми щиро вдячні вишивальниці Олі Байда–Тлуста за її чудову працю.

Українське Козацтво ім. Байди–Вишневецького має свою історію в українському суспільстві Саскатуну, а також цілій Канаді. Вони дотримуються повчального слова Ісуса Христа: *«...більш блаженне давати як брати»*. (Дії 20:35). Це є філантропійне братство. До речі кажучи, вони створили стипендії при Саскачеванському університеті, допомагають емігрантам з України, представляють козацьке життя під час культурних виставок, відвідують дитячі оселі і т. д. Козаки, Тарас і Йосиф Байда, були учасниками другої великої історичної Козацької Ради в Києві, 1992 р. Були свідками, як Його Святість Патріярх Мстислав дав своє Патріярше благословення вибраному генерал–майорові В. Муляві, як Гетьманові Всеукраїнського Козацтва.

Проголошено ім'я володаря першої нагороди ім. В. Тарнопольського

Фундація Катедри Українознавчих студій в Торонті проголосила Юру Рудюка, студента третього курсу юридичного факультету Львівського університету, володарем першої нагороди імени Володимира Сурми Тарнопольського.

Нагорода, яка сприяє розвиткові демократичних інституцій, людських прав і первинности закону в Україні, дозволить Рудюку цієї осени вивчати канадську правову систему на юридичному факультеті Саскачеванського університету. Декан Пітер МакКіннон зазначив: «Ми чекаємо першого студента, який одержав стипендію Тарнопольського, тут, в Саскачеванському університеті, й сподіваємось на співпрацю з Фундацією та іншими університетами, з якими був зв'язаний шановний Володимир Тарнопольський».

Рудюк одержав стипендію імени Анни й Михайла Бардин для участи в Парляментарній програмі «Канада–Україна» – 1996, яка проходила в канадському Парляменті. Його визнано найкращим із 31 стажера, які перед тим навесні завершили стажування в Парляменті.

«Ми надзвичайно задоволені, що володарем нагороди імени Тарнопольського вибрано Юру Рудюка, оскільки тема його дослідження, присвячена реформуванню правової системи України, є дуже своєчасною і важливою», — сказав Ігор В. Бардин, Голова Фундації Катедри Українознавчих Студій — організації в Торонті, яка заснувала цю нагороду.

29 вересня у Саскатуні Рудюк від імені родини Тарнопольського прийняв Нагороду за визначний внесок у громадське життя, яка була призначена шановному судді Тарнопольському Саскачеванською Провінційною Радою Конгресу Українців Канади. Глибокий символізм, що відзначав прийняття студентом права з України нагороди, наданої одному з найвидатніших канадських правників, в належний спосіб засвідчив початок перебування Юрія в Юридичному коледжі Саскачеванського університету.

Цією нагородою Фундація заохочує студентів українських університетів брати участь у процесі побудови Української Держави на засадах поваги до людських прав та первинности закону.

Скоєно напад на телерадіоцентр ВМФ

(Радіо Люкс)—Пізно у вечері, 17–го січня, трьома невідомими скоєно напад на телерадіоцентр «Бриз» Військово–Морських Сил України у Севастополі.

Погрожуючи ножем, один із нападників вимагав знеструмити студійну апаратуру. Було збито з ніг чергового офіцера. Злочинці намагались винести з радіостудії стереомагнітофон, компакт–дисплейер, але чергова служба не дала їм це зробити. Вибивши вхідні двері, невідомі зникли з телерадіоцентру.

Як повідомили агентству УНІАН у телерадіоцентрі «Бриз», протягом останнього часу невідомі неодноразово телефонували з погрозами і вимагали припинити діяльність телерадіоцентру. За фактом нападу ведеться розслідування.

Bociurkiw book exceptionally interesting and informative

Review by Morris T. Cherneskey

An exceptionally interesting and informative book entitled *The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and the Soviet State (1939-1950)* was published last year by Dr. Bohdan Bociurkiw.

Dr. Bociurkiw, who received his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago (1961), was a professor at the University of Alberta in Edmonton and Carleton University in Ottawa. This book can be obtained from the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press in Edmonton and is highly recommended.

The book deals with the contrived "re-union of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in West Ukraine with the Russian Orthodox Church" in general and the "1946 Lviv Sobor" in particular. The "re-union" and the Sobor, which was orchestrated by three Ukrainian Catholic priests namely Havryil Kostelnyk, Antonii Pelvetsky and Myhail Melnyk at the instigation of the Soviets was held on March 8, 1946 at St. Georges Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral in Lviv. This Sobor had no canonical validity because it was not convened by the Ukrainian Catholic bishops who, by that time, were under arrest by the Soviet authorities for alleged anti-Soviet activities during WW II.

Anyone interested in the background history of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, since its inception at the 1596 Union of Best up to the present time, would find this book very helpful. It describes how the Russians had endeavored to abolish the Ukrainian Catholic Church from its early days up to the post WW II era at which time they were able to succeed through subterfuge and force in 1946. The book also explains that Russian efforts in this regard continued from the early tsarist times up to and including the Soviet era. But it was only when Metropolitan Sheptytsky died on November 1, 1944 that the Soviets felt strong enough and brave enough to embark on the orthodoxation of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in West Ukraine. The Russians also had similar designs on the Ukrainian Catholic Churches in the U.S.A. and Canada.

Although the Soviets were able to enforce this so-called conversion in a physical sense through the use of force, they were not fully able to persuade the church going public to convert to Orthodoxy. Consequently when the Soviet Union fell apart in 1991 the Ukrainian Catholic Church, its clergy as well as its membership reverted to their original Ukrainian Catholic Status.

This book is extremely well referenced with very detailed foot notes and is a source of good background information such as names, dates and events. The role played by Metropolitans Sheptytsky and Slipyi as well as Bishops Budka and Charnetsky are well examined and considered. Any student of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in West Ukraine would find this book very helpful. It should be required reading by all Ukrainian Catholic families.

Dr. Luciuk offers course at UBC

A new course with a focus on Ukraine is now taught at the University of British Columbia, in Vancouver.

Following an initiative launched by Julia Stasiuk, of the Ukrainian Heritage Language Foundation of British Columbia, Dr Lubomyr Luciuk, an associate professor with the Department of Politics and Economies at the Royal Military College of Canada, in Kingston, agreed to offer a senior-level seminar course entitled "Understanding The Post-Soviet Disunion" for the Department of history and the program in International Relations at the University of British Columbia.

Among the themes being considered are the nationalities question and the disintegration of the USSR, genocide in the former Soviet Union, particularly the Stalinist Terror, the Great Famine of 1932-33 and the experience of Ukraine's people during the Second World War, environmental degradation during the Soviet period and the legacy of communism in eastern Europe.

While in BC, Dr. Luciuk, former director of research for the Ukrainian Canadian Civil Liberties Association, expects to work with the Ukrainian Canadian community of that province to help install commemorative plaques to the memory of those who were unjustly interned there as "enemy aliens" during World War I, specifically in Vernon and Nanaimo. As well, another plaque is planned in honour to Filip Konowal, the only Ukrainian Canadian to have won the British Empire's Victoria Cross. It will be unveiled in New Westminster in early April.

Members of the Ukrainian Canadian communities of Vernon and Nanaimo have already taken the preliminary steps required to install historical markers near the sites where these concentration camps once stood, while Jerry Gangur, former president of the Royal Westminster Regiment Association, has been working with the chairman of UCCLA, John B Gregorovich, since last summer to ensure that Filip Konowal is finally honoured by his own Regiment.

It has now been confirmed that a trilingual plague will be installed on the outside of the Regiment's Armoury in New Westminster this April. It will recall the valour of Cpl. Konowal and of Major Jack Mahony, the other Victoria Cross winner in the Regiment, and be paid for by UCCLA, the Royal Westminster Regiment Association and the Ukrainian Canadian community of B. C..

Gimli Society holds annual meeting

At its annual meeting on St. Michael's Day, the Ukrainian Interlake and Gimli Ukrainian Historical Society elected Rev. Deacon Michael Woroby Vice-president. Rev. Woroby has been associated with other members of the executive who were either born or have worked in the Gimli, Man. area gathering information and doing indepth research about the Ukrainian pioneer settlers and their descendants.

This year the organization released Dr. Michael Ewanchuk's book about the distinguished Ukrainian artist William Kurelek. Kurelek was born in Whitford, AB, and grew up in Stonewall, MB. During his university years he became an agnostic, and while in England to receive additional information about art, became ill and spent four years in a mental hospital.

During those years he was guided to become a religious man, was converted to Catholicism and his health was restored. After seven years in England, he returned to Canada and became a very successful painter. Much of his painting is devoted to scenes in Western Canada and to subjects that were Ukrainian in character.

Other members of the organization are Tony Kuz, past-president, V. Rev. John A. Melny, president, Michael Ewanchuk secretary-treasuer and Anne Smigel and William Solypa.

Diaspora camp held in Belgium

(Ukrinform)—The Ukrainian Assistance Committee in Belgium organized a winter camp for young members of the Ukrainian Diaspora during the Christmas and new year holiday period.

The camp was attended by over 30 people from Belgium, Great Britain, France, Germany, Canada, Yugoslavia, Ukraine, and Australia.

They were addressed by Ukrainian Ambassador to the Benelux countries Boris Tarasyuk, who briefed them about Ukraine's diplomatic achievements in its five years of independence, its international relations, as well as about the problems facing the Ukrainian diplomatic service. Former Ukrainian defense minister Konstantin Morozov also addressed the campers. Activities in the camp included lectures, discussions, and sports.

New Civil Code presented

(Ukrinform)—The newly proposed Civil Code is even more important for the nation's life than the Constitution, says Justice Minister Serhiy Holovaty.

Speaking at a Jan. 9 press conference, after submitting the code to Parliament, Holovaty said it is justly referred to as the code of market economy as well as the code of civil society, private life and economic constitution.

Holovaty also criticized the economic code currently being drafted. He said it uses notions of social and economic order which could revive "plans of economic and social development, purpose-oriented programs, balance of material and market resources, regional planning, etc." contradicting with principles of the market economy.

Environmentalists pan terminal

(OMRI)—A group of Ukrainian environmentalists has panned a project to construct an oil terminal in Kherson Bay, at the mouth of the Dnipro River on the Black Sea, calling it economically absurd and dangerous to nature, ITAR-TASS reported on Jan. 21.

The environmentalists said reconstructing existing oil pipelines would cost US$300 million less and allow the existing terminal and refinery in Kherson Bay to work at full capacity.

Another terminal is located in Odesa, several hundred kilometers to the west.

The planned new terminal, with a projected annual capacity of 6-8 million tons of oil, has already attracted some $26 million of investment, 20% of that from the national budget.

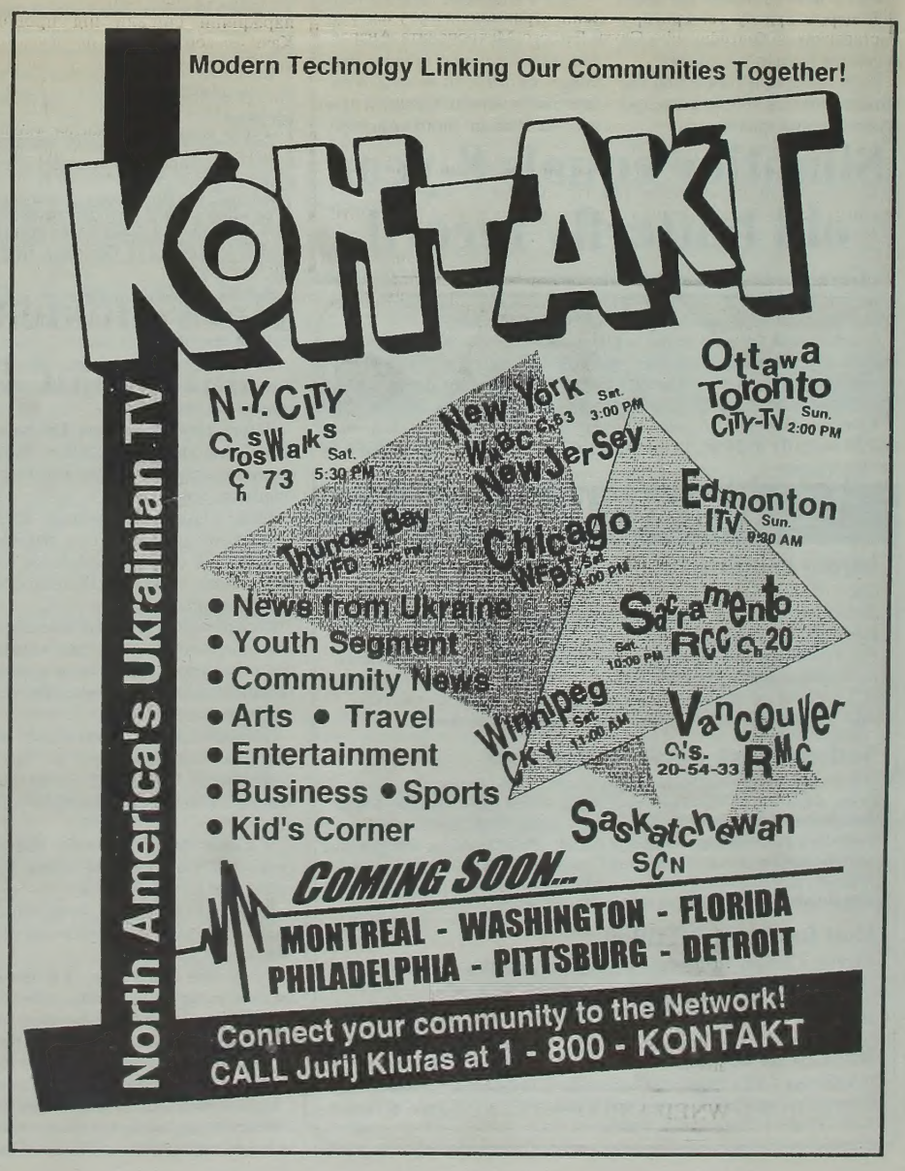
Rada tries to subordinate SPF

(INFOBANK)—On Jan. 23 parliament approved first reading for the bill "On the State Property Fund of Ukraine" which subordinates the SPF to its control.

This subordination is provided for by the Law on Privatization of State Enterprises approved in December 1996. However, until now, President Leonid Kuchma has not signed this law and SPF remains under Cabinet's control.

The new bill defines the main tasks of the SPF as implementation of state policy in the field of privatization and control over state enterprises and shares of state property in the authorized capital of mixed property enterprises.

Additionally the Fund is to promote the development of a fund market, form state reserve of securities, conclude and break contracts with the chairmen of boards of joint stock companies where the state owns the whole or controlling block of shares.



Baiul asks for alcohol education program after impaired arrest

Olympic figure skating champion Oksana Baiul asked to enroll in an alcohol education program in an effort to avoid prosecution on drunk driving charges, reported Reuters and other international agencies, Jan. 28.

Baiul, 19, did not enter a plea during her appearance at a Connecticut court, but instead officially asked to be enrolled in the Pre-Trial Alcohol Education System program, her lawyer said.

"The program is in lieu of a plea, and at the end of the program, the case is expunged from her record," Paul Collins told Reuters.

West Hartford Superior Court Judge Terence Sullivan set Baiul's next court appearance for Feb. 4, when he is expected to rule on whether she has been accepted into the program.

Baiul's other lawyer, Daniel Blume, told the court his client regretted the Jan. 12 incident, when she ran her Mercedes off a road and crashed.

"She understands the seriousness of this matter," Blume said.

"She understands her conduct could send the wrong message to her millions of friends and fans around the world," he said. "She assures that it will never occur again."

Baiul, who lives in Simsbury, Conn., was charged with driving while intoxicated and reckless driving following the accident. She faces a maximum fine of US$300 and 30-day suspension of her driver's license on the reckless driving charge.

Police have estimated her speed at 97 mph on a stretch of road where the legal speed limit was 45 mph, according to court documents.

Baiul suffered a concussion and required stitches. A male passenger received minor injuries.

Oksana Baiul accepting the gold medal at the 1994 Olympics.

Baiul, who is two years younger than Connecticut's legal drinking age, had a blood-alcohol content of 0.168 percent at the time of the accident, according to a hospital report that became public.

Baiul's arrest has been covered extensively in the major media, including stories in Time and Newsweek.

By and large the coverage was sympathetic, most of the stories concentrating on her rapid rise to fame and fortune after an orphaned and impoverished childhood.

"She's a teenager. She's a really good, kind, generous kid ... but like anything that resembles fame and fortune to a young person, those things are difficult to deal with," says Shelly Schultz, Oksana's agent with the William Morris Agency.

Silantiev equals 8-year old butterfly record

Ukraine's Denis Silantiev swam the 100-meter butterfly in 52.51 seconds Jan. 23 at a short course World Cup event, matching the European record set eight years ago by Michael Gross of Germany.

Silantiev took the gold medal, while teammate Pavlo Khnykin won the bronze. The silver went to Vesa Hanski of Finland.

Silantiev had won the 200-meter butterfly the previous day in 1:55.57. The two-day meet was held in Espoo, Finland.

Khnykin also took two golds, winning the men's 100 freestyle in 49.24 and 50 butterfly in 24.40. In the 50-metre butterfly, Silantiev added a silver for Ukraine.

Sports Briefs

Injury continues to plague Bubka

The Achilles tendon injury which forced world pole vault champion Serhiy Bubka to bow out of the 1996 Olympics, made him miss a big event that he organized in his home town. Bubka did not compete in the "Pole-Stars" international indoor competition in Donetsk, but acted as a commentator. "His doctor has banned him from jumping. He will stay out of competition for at least two months, maybe more," said Lyubov Mishchenko, who helped organize the event

Vodopyanova wins biathlon gold

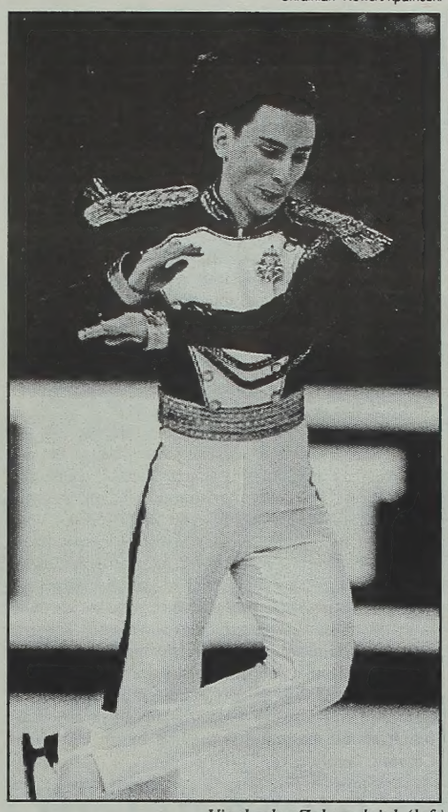
(UkrNews)—Tetyana Vodopyanova won a gold medal for Ukraine in the women's 15 kilometre race at the World Cup biathlon held in Anterselva, Italy, Jan 16. At another World Cup biathlon held in Ruhpolding, Germany, four days earlier, Vodopyanova, along with teammates Olena Zubrilova, Irina Kortshagina and Valentina Tserbe, won the bronze in the women's 7.5 kilometre team event. Zubrilova also finished sixth in the women's 10 kilometre pursuit.

Rud fourth in Biathlon

Ukraine's Tatiana Rud was fourth in the 7.5-kilometer biathlon at the Winter University Games in Seoul, South Korea, Jan. 25. She was behind Elena Maslova of Russia, American Rachel Steer and Kamila Horakova of the Czech Republic.

Fourth in aerial ski

(UkrNews)—Alla Tsuper of Ukraine came in fourth at the World Cup freestyle skiing aerials competition in Lake Placid, NY, Jan. 11. Teammate Nataliya Sherstnyova, was ninth.



Viacheslav Zahorodniuk (left) and Yulia Lavrenchuk right).

Ukraine takes two bronze at European Championships

Controversy surrounds Zahorodniuk's drop from first

Ukraine won two bronze medals at the European Figure Skating Championships held in Paris Jan. 19-25, with Viacheslav Zahorodniuk taking third place in the men's individual competition, while Yulia Lavrenchuk finished third in the women's.

But controversy surrounded Zahorodniuk's drop to third place from first, following the scoring of a Finnish judge.

Zahorodniuk looked to be the champion just after he skated, completing five triples after his second place in the short program.

But judge Pekka Leskinen, a former Finnish champion, rated the last skater on the program, Latvian-born Andrei Vlascenko of Germany, first in the free skating.

No other member of the eight-judge panel had him higher than fourth and seven judges ranked him fifth, sixth or seventh.

Russia's Alexei Urmanov, sixth after the short program, rose to the top only after the marks for Vlascenko entered the computer.

Before Vlascenko skated, Urmanov was second behind Zahorodniuk with fellow Russian and former champion Ilya Kulik third and Frenchman Philippe Candeloro fourth.

After Vlascenko, Urmanov rose to first place, Candeloro advanced two positions to second, Zahorodniuk dropped two places to third and Kulik fell to fourth. Vlascenko, third after the short program, finished sixth.

Because of his generous assessment of Vlascenko, who had a heavy fall and other mistakes in his routine, the other contenders were a position lower in Leskinen's free-skating order of merit than they would otherwise have been.

Urmanov, 23, was a clear winner of the free skating with eight first-place votes. Yet that would not have been enough for overall victory had Leskinen not marked Zahorodniuk down to fourth in the free skating.

If Zahorodniuk had been one place higher in Leskinen's assessment, he would have had the gold medal with Urmanov second.

Teammate Dmytro Dmytrenko finished eighth in the finals — the same position he had held after the short program.

But Yevhen Pliuta dropped from seventh following the short program, to twelfth in the final. He had been the surprise winner of the qualifying round.

The tall, blond 22-year-old from Kyiv did six triples and had only one small error in his routine, but qualifying round marks are not carried over into the finals.

In the women's individual event, Yulia Lavrenchuk fell once but did enough to move up two places to third as Vanessa Gusmeroli of France, third before the free skating, dropped to sixth behind Olena Liashenko of Ukraine, who also moved up two places from her standings after the short program.

Sports

First place was won by Irina Slutskaya of Russia, while the silver was taken by Krisztina Czako of Hungary,

In Ice Dance, Irina Romanova and Ihor Yaroshenko finished sixth, Olena Hrushina and Ruslan Honcharov, 13th, while Natalia Hudina and Vitaliy Kurkudym were 18th.

Ukrainian natives Oksana Gritschuk and Evgeny Platov won the gold for Russia, Anjelika Krylova and Oleg Ovsiannikov got Russia the silver as well, while Sophie Moniotte and Pascal Lavanchy won the bronze for France.

Elena Belousovskaya and Stanislav Morozov picked up two spots from their short program, finishing eighth in the pairs finals, but Evhenia Filonenko and Ihor Marchenko dropped from seventh to 11th.

The gold was won by Marina Eltsova and Andrei Bushkov of Russia, Germany's Mandy Woetzel and Ingo Steuer took the silver, while Russians Elena Berezhnaya and Anton Sikharulidze settled for the bronze.

Medvedev ousted in 4th round

American world number two Michael Chang came from a set behind to oust Ukraine's Andriy Medvedev in the fourth round of the Australian Open, Jan. 19.

The towering Medvedev has been playing some of the most exciting tennis of the Melbourne championships and an upset appeared on the cards after he took the first set 6-4, reported Reuters.

But Chang, leaving nothing to chance, soon exerted his authority and closed Medvedev out of the match to win 4-6 6-2 6-2 6-1.

Two days earlier blew away his third-round opponent. Medvedev, who rose to a career-high world ranking of four before slipping to 36 this year, offered a sharp reminder of former achievements by demolishing Dutchman Dennis van Scheppingen 6-1 6-1 6-1 in 70 minutes.

After beating 15th seed and former Wimbledon champion Michael Stich in the second round, the Ukrainian said he would not surrender without a fight.

"Every time I step on the court — it doesn't matter who is on the other side — they should know they will not have an easy match. They should know they will have to struggle, that they will have to bleed," he said.

Medvedev' sister, Natalia, made it to the second round where she lost 6-2,6-2 to unseeded Mary Pierce of France.

UNARD prepares for CUBI '97

Westdall says Canadian investment can amount to 50% of Ukraine's total to date

Business

(UkrNews/Ukrinform/InfoBank)—The Ukrainian National Agency for Reconstruction and Development held a session in Kyiv Jan. 23 to prepare for the Canada-Ukraine Business Initiative '97, which will be held in Calgary, Regina and Winnipeg this June.

The session was chaired by Roman Shpek, UNARD chairperson, and was attended by senior officers of the Finance, Agriculture and other ministries.

Speaking at the session, Canada's Ambassador to Ukraine, Christopher Westdall, said potential Canadian investors have drafted projects for Ukraine, which, if implemented, will exceed 50 percent of aggregate capital investment in Ukraine's national economy since it proclaimed itself an independent and sovereign nation.

One of these projects involves the construction of a US$500,000 hotel and a business center in Kyiv for the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development in May, 1998, he noted.

Christopher Westdall

Westdall said the upcoming conference is Ukraine's golden opportunity to step up economic cooperation with Canada and thus promote many of its economic priorities.

Ukrainian Prime Minister Pavlo Lazarenko is expected to participate in the conference, reported InfoBank.

The UNARD session decided to hold regular biweekly sessions of the organizing Committee with the very next one expected to consider early proposals from potential Ukrainian partners.

CUBI '97 will be kicked off with a business conference in Calgary June 16, followed by sector seminars for Energy (Calgary), Agriculture (Regina) and Construction (Winnipeg).

CUBI '97 is a private sector initiative supported by the governments of Canada, Ukraine, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

Canadian registrations are being handled by the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies at the University of Alberta.

Marathon pulls out of Ukraine temporarily

(UkrNews)—Marathon Oil says it is temporarily pulling out of its Ukraine operations where the company had been planning to develop gas fields.

Company spokesman Bill Ryder told Ukrainian News the company is suspending its work because questions related to joint licensing, gas marketing, security of investment, and tax and legal stability have to be answered by the Ukrainian side.

Ryder added that Marathon had outlined a development proposal, but nothing has been done to satisfy their doubts.

"If these questions can be resolved, we will be back there," he noted. "We're not walking away from it totally."

Marathon had been considering investments of up to US$ 200 million in the development of gas field in Poltava Oblast.

Gas talks begin with BP

(INFOBANK)—Talks between British Petroleum and Ukraine's State Committee on Oil and Gas to assess natural gas resources in the Dnipro-Donetsk basin began Jan. 14.

The draft agreement submitted by BP stipulates that Ukrainian oil/gas authorities will not enter into negotiations on gas exploration in that area with any other third party within 11 months of the signing of an agreement.

Three months prior to the submission of final exploration results, BP is to inform the State Committee in writing about the sites at which the company will extract gas.

Both sides agreed that a provision not to enter into negotiations with any third party does not cover the existing licences and talks that are currently under way.

Government to decide between GM and Daewoo in March

Ukraine should make a decision in March whether to choose General Motors or South Korea's Daewoo Group as the major foreign investor in Zaporizhia's AvtoZAZ car plant, reported Reuters and InfoBank.

Valery Malev, the minister in charge of machine building, the military and conversion, says that a field of six investors including Renault and Peugeot of France, Italy's Fiat and South Korea's Hyundai, had been narrowed down to two.

"There is no scheduled date for the final announcement. We are considering the proposals fully. But we expect to finalize the tender and announce the winner by the end of the first quarter of this year — in March," Malev said.

Two years ago Ukraine began looking for an investor for the plant. AvtoZAZ needs more than US$1 billion in the next few years.

Daewoo had an early start on GM, with negotiations beginning in May, 1995, but GM has been lobbying heavily with the Ukrainian government.

AvtoZAZ began production in 1963 and has an annual capacity of 150,000 cars. But last year output fell to 6,881 compared to 1992's level of 130,000 cars, according to Oleh Kovalenko, head of the AvtoZAZ office in Kyiv.

Government sources said GM foresaw production of 25,000 Opel Vectras a year, increasing to 40,000 cars. They said GM wanted to produce 70,000-80,000 Ukrainian Tavria small city cars.

AvtoZAZ disagreed with GM's output forecasts and wanted to produce no less than 100,000 cars a year. Daewoo's proposal is for 100,000 Tavrias a year and to start assembling three models of its own within 18 months.

The key difference in General Motors' approach was that Daewoo was aiming at customers in Ukraine and other members of the CIS while GM wanted to export Opels to Europe and elsewhere, said Malev.

State committee proposes oil and gas tax benefits

(INFOBANK)—The State Committee on Oil and Gas and the Oil-Refining Industry is to submit its proposals on tax benefits for construction companies involved in projects to develop the supply of oil and gas in Ukraine, to the Cabinet of Ministers.

The proposed benefits include exemptions from the Value Added Tax and the imported equipment excise tax. Tax benefits are part of a government program aimed at diversifying sources of oil and gas supplies for Ukraine.

As well, a diversification program provides for a gradual decrease in exports of Russian oil and gas and their replacement by supplies from Central Asia, the Near East and TransCaucasus, and also for a greater role for domestic pipelines in the transport of oil and gas from these areas to Europe.

Accordingly, Ukraine is to be more actively involved in the EU CIS program aimed at modernizing the oil/gas pipeline network in the Black Sea area. The program is supervised by the French Sofregaz and Sofresid companies.

In line with the diversification program, the Interagency Coordinating Center on the diversification of oil and gas supplies, created Jan. 14, is to prepare a number of intergovernmental agreements on supplies and transit of oil and gas; to set up a tender center which will attract foreign investment and hold tenders for the right to implement diversification-related projects in Ukraine.

Israelis to drill in Poltava, Chernihiv

(INFOBANK)—The State Committee on Geology and Utilization of Mineral Resources has awarded a licence for oil and gas exploration to the Israeli-Ukrainian joint venture Carlton Trading Ukraine Ltd.

The exploration area covers the region between Pryluky and Myrhorod in Poltava and Chernihiv Oblasts and is valid for 20 years. According to the agreement, the licence bearer can transfer exploration rights to a third party.

Talks between Carlton Trading Ukraine Ltd. and the State Committee on Geology began last year. The JV had signed an earlier contract with the State Committee in 1995. However, it could not start exploration work due to disagreements over sites with the ChernihivNaftoHazGeologiya (Chernihiv Oil/Gas Geology) state-owned company, which operates in the region. The JV used this time to gather and analyse the necessary geological and geophysical data.

In his interview with Infobank, ChernihivNaftoHazHeolohiya chief engineer Volodymyr Marukhnyak said that the oil and gas fields in the Pryluky and Myrhorod areas are unlikely to be profitable because of the depths of deposits - 3,600 meters.

Ukrainian-American Trade Commission meets

(Ukrinform)—The Trade and Investment Committee of the Kuchma-Gore Ukrainian-American Intergovernmental Commission held a meeting in the Ukrainian capital on Jan. 24.

The Ukrainian-American intergovernmental commission was established by Ukrainian President Kuchma and United States Vice President Al Gore to broaden strategic cooperation between the two countries.

The Ukrainian delegation to the meeting was led by the Ukrainian government's special representative in charge of trade and economic cooperation with the US, Andriy Honcharuk, who is also deputy minister of foreign economic relations and trade.

The American delegation was led by United States special representative on trade and energy cooperation with CIS countries, Yan Kalitski and US Ambassador to Ukraine William Green Miller. The meeting was attended by representatives of several Ukrainian and American departments and ministries, representatives of the American Chamber of Commerce in Ukraine, and representatives of the Ukrainian-American Business Council.

Addressing journalists at the end of the meeting, Kalitski described it as a success, adding that participants discussed a broad range of issues involving development of trade and investment cooperation.

Miller noted that progress was achieved at the meeting.

Ukrainian representatives also held similar views. They said the committee will continue to work towards creation of the positive business climate required for the development of the Ukrainian economy.

Grant Bank opens centre

(Ukrinform)—Kharkiv's Grant Bank has set up a center to train financial experts for private banks in Ukraine.

The nascent training center's establishment has been assisted by the US Agency for International Development. Visiting professors from the United States will be in charge of the courses for trainees, who will learn about business practices in industrially developed nations including the USA and Canada.

Grant Bank has embarked on a series of projects involving Ukrainian banks' activity abroad through setting up their affiliates there.

Grant Bank cooperates with several Canadians banks through contacts which were made during it visit to Canada last fall and maintains an office in Regina.

Business Briefs

Black Sea gas on stream

(Ukrinform)—Two wells are now producing 300 thousand cub.m. of gas and 30 tons of gas condensate daily at the Shtormovoye gas/condensate field on the Black Sea shelf. A 3.8 meter-long underwater gas pipeline has been reportedly installed and put into service as well. This has been carried out by the "ChornomorNaftohaz" state association.

Speedy budget approval urged

(INFOBANK)—Ukraine's Union of Industrialists and Businessmen passed a resolution at its Jan. 21 convention urging speedy approval of Ukraine's state budget, based on a new tax system. Ukrainian businessmen also demanded approval of a privatization program for 1997 which would reject the parliament-imposed ban on the privatization of large companies in exchange for investment commitments.

Transport gets low grades

(INFOBANK)—The Collegium of Ukraine's Ministry of Transport assessed the status of passenger transportation during 1996 as unsatisfactory, Jan. 23. It stated volume was down 15% from 1995 adding that low safety standards and an inflexible pricing policy was causing many foreign clients to choose other modes. It also recommended that the number of airports be reduced from 36 to 15-16.

Small farm movement at low ebb

(INFOBANK)—Speaking to small farm owners Jan. 20, Deputy Prime Minister Mykhailo Zubets said the creation of new small farms has considerably slowed down. In 10 oblasts their number even decreased in 1996. The largest number of small farms are in Mykolayiv, Odesa, Kherson, Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, Zaporizhia and Kirovohrad oblasts. Small farms own two percent of all arable land in Ukraine, as of Jan. 1, or 835,000 hectares.

Gas transit JV to be registered

(INFOBANK)—The new Ukrainian/Russian/Turkish joint venture HazTranzit Co. is to be registered in Kyiv within the next two months, says the head of the department of gas transportation at the State Committee on Oil and Gas.

According to Olexandr Sverdlov, both the Russian GazProm and the Ukrainian UkrGazProm JSC are to hold a 37% stake each in the new company. The remaining 26% are to be owned by the Turkish partner, represented by the TransBalkan Consortium.

At present, the Consortium includes four private-owned companies — Enka, Gamma, Tefen and Entes. Sverdlov added that the state-owned Botas Oil/Gas Co. is likely to join the Consortium.

Sverdlov said the new JV's goal is to increase the exports of Russian gas to Turkey and to the Balkans through Ukraine.

In line with the project, HazTranzit will construct a chain of new gas pipelines and compressor stations

AN-140 to undergo certification testing

(Ukrinform/InfoBank)—The prototype of the AN-140 transport aircraft will undergo certification testing as early as this February and March.

Speaking after a closed-door meeting at the Antonov aviation research and technical complex, Jan. 13, State Minister Anatoliy Minchenko noted that the most urgent financial problems have been resolved.

The new AN-140 has been referred to as an aircraft of the future, having a smaller size and a range of 1,500 km. It will carry 52 passengers. Its predecessor AN-24 had a range of 1,000 km and carried 50 passengers.

Engineering Minister Valeriy Malev said 54 million hryvnias (C$38.5 million), of which 10 million will come from the state budget, are required to complete the project.

Antonov's Chief Petro Volobuyev said the government may order three to four such planes, which will begin its mass production. He added that a contract for joint manufacture has been signed with Iran.

Antonov Aviation experts predict a large demand for AN-140 planes by 2005 —105 planes in Ukraine and 500-600 in CIS countries.

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Official opening of Meest Travel

Close to 100 people braved the minus 34°C weather to attend an open house marking official opening of Meest Travel in Edmonton, Jan. 23. Meest Travel, which is run by Meest Alberta Ltd. has actually been in operation for two years and offers a variety of services including tours to Ukraine, all kinds of travel insurance and tickets to anywhere in the world. The company also provides a wide range of business travel services in Ukraine, including translation and secretarial services, office and meeting room rentals and access to computers, fax machines and photocopiers. Visitors to the open house were informed about the services of Meest Travel and of Meest's parcel service and had the chance to participate in several draws. Pictured above: Rostyslav Kisil, President of Meest Corporation Inc. and Luba Kowalchyk, Western regional Manager for Meest Alberta Ltd. draw winners for the prizes.

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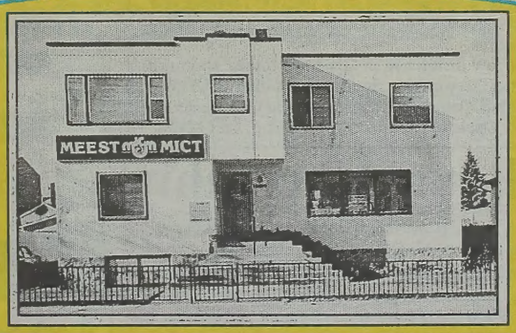

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